THE Atheist turn'd Deist, AND THE Deist turn'd Christian: OR, THE REASONABLENESS and UNION OF *Natural*, and the *True* Christian Religion.

BY *THO. EMES*, Chirurgo-Medicus.

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Speak every Man Truth with his Neighbour; for we are Members of one another.

Eph. 4. 25.

AND

So ſpeak ye, and ſo do ye, as they that ſhall be judged by the Law of Liberty.

Jam. 2. 12.

ERRATA.

PAge 3. line 10. for *certify*, read *certifie*. L. 20. for *Lier*, r. *Lyar*. P. 4. l. 26. for *ll*, read *all*. P. 6. l. laſt, for *unbeholding*, r. *unbeholden*. P. 21. l. 20. for *then*, r. *than*. P. 22. for *beholding*, r. *beholden*. So P. 34. l. 34. P. 43. l. 36. r. *Marriage-Conſtancy*, P. 45. l. 5. for *countervaile*, r. *countervale*. P. 84. l. 6. for *God's*, r. *Gods*. P. 95. after *ſame*, add *time*. P. 118. l. 26. blot *and*, after *David*. P. 181. l. 16. for *they*, r. *the before Oaths*.

1698
E53

Some of the principal Heads of this Diſcourſe; under which divers other things are touched upon.

Numb.

1. *WHAT neceſſary to the End of Man.*
2. *Three Ways whereby we know Truth.*
3. *The neareſt Way to prove the Being of God.*
4. *Self what: The Neceſſity of ſuppoſing a Divine Being, thence proved.*
5. *God knowable by Experience or Senſe.*
6. *Self more largely conſidered, and ſaid to be Cogitation, or Mind.*
7. *Objections againſt Cogitation's being the Eſſence of Self, anſwered.*
8. *God conſidered more largely, and as in himſelf, or eſſential Attributes.*
9. *The common Notion of Omnipreſence, falſe.*
10. *God conſidered in relation to the Creatures, negatively and poſitively.*
11. *Of the End of God's making things.*
12. *Man's Duty or Religion, conſidered in general.*
13. *The ſame conſidered more particularly in Love to God.*
14. *And Love to his Works.*
15. *Love the Foundation of all orderly Behaviour.*

16. *The*

N°.

16. *The Natural Reaſon and Senſe of the Dec* 1.
logue.
17. *The Goodneſs and Well-being of the Creatur*
wherein it conſiſts.
18. *The Ground of Unhappineſs.* 2.
19. *The true Notion of Sin, and that Sin is a*
ways an Act; and Original Sin as ſuppos 3.
diſtinct from Actual Sin, a Miſtake; the tr 4.
Notion of it.
20. *The Fall of Man from Innocence, natural* 5.
known.
21. *The Aggravation, or Greatneſs of Sins Di*
order. 6.
22. *How the Creature ſhould behave it ſelf on th*
Conviction of Sin: With the Natural Dut
of Repentance. 7.
23. *Forgiveneſs with God, apparently diſcoverab* 8.
by the Light of Nature. 9.
24. *Why God made Creatures capable of Sin.*
25. *Free will conſidered.* 10.
26. *What an Arbitrary Command of God, and ho*
reaſonable. 11.
27. *All the Commands of God tend to Mans Hap*
pineſs, or Pleaſure: Diſobedience to the con
trary; neither Obedience nor Diſobedienc 12.
add to, or take any thing from God.
28. *That the Creature having once ſinn'd, is mor* 13.
inclinable to go on ſinning, than to repent. 14.
29. *Convicted Sinners at firſt unapt to believ*
that God will forgive. 15.
30. *The Scope of all God's Dealings with Sinner*
in order to their Recovery. 16.

31. *Im*

1. *Immortality, and a future Life, discoverable by Reason what Death is, and its use since Sin, with Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul.*
2. *The Resurrection of the Body rationally concluded.*
3. *Future Judgment necessary.*
4. *Man capable of Repentance, and doing his Duty.*
5. *The divers Motives and Arguments God has given Men to perswade them to repent, and what the compleatest.*
6. *Revelation chiefly for enforcing Natural Religion: Divers Considerations about Revelation, Miracles, Faith,* &c.
7. *Of Christ, and his Work.*
8. *Of his Person.*
9. *All that are saved, saved the same way,* viz. *by Christ.*
10. *Scripture a Gift of God argued, and the need of Revelation.*
11. *Some things taught in the World as Doctrines of the Bible, not tending to the true End and Scope of Revelation.*
12. *As Mistakes about Reconciliation, Christ's Death and Sacrifice, Propitiation,* &c.
13. *About Satisfaction.*
14. *Mistakes about Punishment: God not to be thought the Cause of the Creatures Misery.*
15. *Mistakes about Imputation of Sin and Righteousness.*
16. *Mistakes about Merit.*

47. *About*

N°.
47. *About Redemption.*
48. *About Interceſſion.*
49. *How the Mediation of Chriſt becomes e*
fectual.
50. *Of the Doctrine of Fate, or abſolute Predeſt*
nation.
51. *A Reflection on the preſent State of Chriſti*
nity.

THER

1. THERE are Two Things neceſſary for Man in order to his attaining the End of his Being: To know the Truth; And to Will well. Or in other words, To be Wiſe, and Good.

As for Knowing the Truth, there are two Things wherein this Neceſſary Wiſdom doth chiefly conſiſt; The Knowledge of God, and the Knowledge of Ones Self. And there is one thing wherein Man's Goodneſs doth conſiſt; and that is, in the Conformity of his Will to the Will of his Maker, to will as God wills.

The Order of our Knowledge of theſe two Objects, *God* and *Self*, ſeems to be this; We begin to know our Selves as the Objects, of which we are firſt aware; and then we proceed to the Knowledge of God: But the Connection of the Knowledg of God, and of our Selves is ſuch, that we can never know our Selves well, tell we ariſe to the Knowledge of God; nor know God as we ought, if we know but little of our Selves.

2. There are but three Ways, I conceive, whereby we can have any Knowledge of God, our Selves, or any thing elſe. 1. By Senſe. 2. By Reaſon: Or 3. By Revelation.

By the Knowledge of Senſe I do not mean only the Senſation, or Perception of Bodies; but alſo, and rather the Experience, Senſe, or Conſcience we have of our own Thoughts, or may have of others. All thoſe Notions we have as it were, paſſively received, without reaſoning; and which are as it were, the Matter or Ground on which Reaſon works.

The ſecond way of Knowledge. Reaſon is the Faculty of arguing or diſcourſing with our Selves, whereby from conſidering our paſſive Knowledges,

or Senſations, we ariſe to get more full Knowledge of things, and of what we had no immediate Senſation, or Intuition, and by getting the Knowledge of ſome things, we proceed by Arguments, and get the Knowledge, and better Knowledge of others. As by conſidering the Creatures, (eſpecially our ſelves) we may ariſe to the knowledge of God; and then by conſidering our Maker, we are led back again better to know our ſelves; and from a better knowledge of our ſelves, we get ſtill the clearer knowledge of our Author.

The third way we may be made acquainted with God, our ſelves, or other things, *viz.* Revelation is but as it were a compendious Aſſiſtance of the two former: An expreſs, or particular Inſtruction from God, telling the Creature in ſhort, what he would have been, either ignorant of, or not ſo ſoon, or eaſily have known without ſuch an immediate Teaching: As for inſtance; What God is, and will be found to be, what we are, ought to be, and ſhall be hereafter. But of this I ſhall ſpeak more, when the Order of my Diſcourſe brings me to it again.

By the Knowledge of God and our ſelves, which we may have theſe three ways, we are rationally led, or perſwaded to will well, by conforming our Wills to the Will of God.

The Knowledge of God, howſoever attained, may be divided into Two Heads. Firſt, That he is, or that there is a God. Secondly, What he is. The Knowledge of our ſelves likewiſe will bear the ſame diviſion. The Knowledge of what God is may alſo be divided in two parts: Firſt, What he is in himſelf. Secondly, What he is in relation to his Creatures.

3. Now that we may find out, and prove to our ſelves the Exiſtence of a Divine Being, or God, let us deſcend into our ſelves [the neareſt ſtep we can make, and plaineſt way we can go, and that which

I here ſhall chooſe to take, leaving thoſe other more commonly traced paths] and ſee what Arguments we can find within us for the being of a God, yea by what neceſſity we are compell'd to acknowledge that he is.

Firſt, Every Man hath a Senſe, or Experience of the Reality of his own Being certain, beyond all demonſtration; ſo that none can doubt of his own Exiſtence, or needs to have it proved; and if any could here doubt, that very doubting would certifie him that he hath a Being, or is. For if there be a Doubting, an Enquiring, a Suppoſing, a Will to know, *&c.* there is ſomething: Actions and Paſſions cannot be without Being, or where there is no Being; of nothing nothing can be ſuppos'd, affirm'd, or denied: So that it would be but time loſt to go about to convince a Man of his own Being, of which he cannot but be certain, and what he cannot deny, but he will at the ſame time affirm himſelf a wilful Lyar.

4. We ſhall therefore conſider in the next place (ſo far as our preſent buſineſs in finding a Divine Being requires) what we are: And becauſe I have but now made mention of Doubting and Conſidering, and find Men ſo apt to doubt, queſtion, and conſider what we are as to our Eſſence, or Being, as well as of other things: I ſay we are Doubters, Queſtioners, Conſiderers, and Suppoſers: But what is Doubting, Queſtioning, Suppoſing, and Conſidering? It is Thinking, and that an imperfect Thinking; Thinking that wants ſomething, in which we find an incompleat defective Underſtanding, and a Will or Deſire of ſomething we have not. Now where-ever is found any thing of Ignorance in the Underſtanding, or any want of Power in the Will, it appears that that Being cannot in any wiſe be thought to be of it ſelf, or ſelf-ſufficient; but muſt

conſequentially be acknowledg'd to be dependent, having ſome other Being its cauſe: For he that finds himſelf inſufficient to himſelf, can in no wiſe be thought to be ſufficient of himſelf: He that not only wants ſomething he may have, but moreover cannot give himſelf what he wants, is dependent on ſomething elſe for ſome addition; when a Being that is independant, and ſelf-ſufficient in its Eſſence, cannot be ſuppoſed to need another than its own Underſtanding and Will on any account. We all find in our ſelves a want of Knowledge; we know but a few things, and we know but a little of thoſe few things we know; and moreover, of thoſe things we do know, we come to the Knowledge of one after another, ſo that we are ſometime ignorant of what we afterwards know, yea in all our Thoughts we find a conſtant ſucceſſion of one Thought after another; we cannot think of all we think together, but we forget one thing while we conſider another, (and we do not ſee it poſſible that it ſhould ever be otherwiſe with us) which Imperfection of the ſucceſſion of Thoughts one after another in ſpiritual Natures or Minds, is the notion of Time, and that for which they are ſaid to be in Time, or Timous Beings, and would be ſo if there were no motion of Bodies, or Body at all; and while there is any Mind having this ſucceſſion of Thoughts afore and after Time is, and will be, and that Mind in Time, or Timous: Notwithſtanding the Fancy of thoſe who talk of Souls going into Eternity, or being eternal, *à parte poſt*, on the after half, half eternal, which is a whole Contradiction: Now where there is a ſucceſſion of Thoughts one after another, there was a precedure of them one before another, till we come to a firſt, or beginning Thought, which with us is paſt; and what is paſt was preſent and future, and what was future was not then in actual being, (the

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ſame muſt be ſaid of Men, or other things that are before one another as well as of Thoughts, there muſt be a firſt) and where a thing was not, but only might be, if it be, or begin, it muſt be begun; and what is begun muſt have a Cauſe, or be begun by another; it cannot be its own efficient, for ſo it would be ſuppos'd to be before it is, which is a Contradiction. Now if there be ſomething that began to be, (as we muſt conclude of our ſelves) there muſt be a Cauſe of our beginning, which Cauſe did not begin to be; for if it had it had been alike inſufficient, and it-ſelf wanted a Cauſe, and ſo muſt be cauſed, and ſo we muſt run on tell we come to a firſt Cauſe, which is ſufficient, and neceſſary of it-ſelf, always the ſame; and this firſt Cauſe is God. And as we find our ſelves from our imperfect Underſtandings and ſucceſſive Thoughts, neceſſitated to grant our ſelves cauſed, and that the Cauſe of our Being muſt be ſufficient of it-ſelf, or perfect; if we come to the particular Conſideration of our Wills, we ſhall find two things there denoteing Imperfection and Inſufficiency. Firſt, Variableneſs. Secondly, Impotence. As to the Variableneſs of Will, we all find our Wills changeable, ſometimes willing one thing, then another; yea ſometimes one thing then the contrary; in which Variableneſs of Will, is alſo ſeen a farther Imperfection of our Underſtanding: For we will the thing which at the preſent appears beſt to us; but what at one time ſeems good or beſt, at another is not ſo in our Judgment, but bad: Now at one of theſe times the Judgment fails and errs. Secondly, We find the Impotence of our Wills in that we will things we cannot effect. This every one is ſenſible of; he that affects to be an Atheiſt himſelf. We ſee a Defect in our Knowledge often, we would know ſomethings we don't know, and what we cannot cauſe our ſelves

to know when we would; likewiſe we would ſometimes do the things we find we cannot do, ſo we ſtill find our ſelves inſufficient; ſo that there may be ſomething added to our Knowledge, (nay we find there daily is) which we at our pleaſure cannot add; and that there may be ſome increaſe of our power, which we of our ſelves cannot cauſe. How will this prove a God, may the Atheiſt ſay? I anſwer, moſt evidently: For if we want ſomething which we ſee we may poſſibly have, and cannot at our pleaſure have it, we could much leſs have Being of our ſelves; if we cannot know, or do without being beholden to ſome other, even things we may ſo come to know or do; Want ſome other cauſe than our own Wills for a ſmall addition to our Perfection, we could much leſs have Being itſelf unbeholden to any other. Again, he that wants ſomething, he that knows but ſome things, and can do but ſome things, but may know and do more, has but ſo much Knowledge, and ſo much Power, and may have more, might have had leſs and leſs, and conſequently the leaſt, yea none at all, and ſo no Being; and where Being might have been wanting, there cannot be Self-exiſtence. Moreover, whoever is not the cauſe of all other Beings, is not neceſſary to the Being of other things; we are certain that there are other Beings beſides our ſelves, and we may be as ſure that we are not the cauſe of their Being: For we do not know our ſelves to be ſo, nor experience our Production of them; but whatever is the Cauſe of the other Beings, cannot be ſuppos'd to be ignorant of its being ſo, or to have produced them at unawares, an act of Will being neceſſary to the effecting of a thing, of which none can be ignorant. Now if we are not neceſſary in order to the Being of other things, but that they may be, and are, and that unbeholden to us, we are not abſolutely

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neceſſary ; and if not neceſſary we might have wanted Being ; but we have Being, we know by Experience or Conſcience, tho' we are ſuch imperfect Beings, ſuch unneceſſary Beings. Now if we are, and are not of our ſelves, we muſt have Being from another, and that other Being muſt be perfect, neceſſary, ſelf-ſufficient, or it would be in-ſufficient to give Being to me, or any other ; and this perfect, neceſſary, ſelf ſufficient Being, is God.

5. Again, Beſides the Conſideration of our ſelves as in-ſufficient Beings, that of neceſſity muſt have a ſufficient Cauſe, which by Reaſon proves the Being of God ; There is another way whereby we may be certain of the ſame Truth (which for ſome reaſon I omitted, as Order requir'd, to ſpeak of firſt) and that is a certain Senſe or Experience of God, which we may find in our ſelves if we will attend unto our own Thoughts. Thus we find ſeveral things done in us which we do not, nor can do ; we have Thoughts wherein we are merely paſſive, as in Senſible Perceptions, or Thoughts we have by the Occaſion, or Means of Body, if we are not the cauſe of them, as we may well conclude when we find we cannot alter them ; if we cannot but ſee, and hear, *&c.* while the Organs are rightly diſpos'd, and that ſo and ſo, and the Bodies that we have the Perceptions or Thoughts of, cannot be the cauſe of thoſe Thoughts, being more imperfect and impotent than our own Minds, having not ſo much as Wills, or any power to effect Reality, or cauſe Being, but are caus'd themſelves, and cannot create Perceptions ; as we find our ſelves affected, or ſenſible of thoſe Thoughts, we ſhall (if we conſider) find our ſelves forced to acknowledge our Senſibility of the Cauſe of them. If I ſee, or hear, and ſo ſuffer a Thought, and am not the Cauſe of this Senſation, nor can the Objects of theſe Senſations cauſe them

in me; there must be some Agent or Cause of this Passion, and that can be none but God. And as we believe God, and he only is able to create or cause Thoughts, or Perception in us, by the means of other our fellow-Creatures, and Thoughts or Perceptions of them; so it is not less reasonable to think that he can cause Thoughts in us, and apply an Object to our Understanding without the use of those means, even by an immediate Act of his Will, and present himself as the Object of our Understanding. We may farther suppose, God could have created one only Mind, then that Mind must have had an Object besides it-self, it being not self-sufficient; and there being nothing else but God, it must have thought on God, and without any means, God's immediate Will being sufficient, which would have been a a Sense of God. And that there are other Minds, and other things besides Minds, does not hinder but that God may cause a Sensation in the Mind immediately: And some Persons perhaps of considerate Judgments will not think me far out of the way, if I say I have known such immediate Sensations, and think others have, or may have the like Experience, (if they attend to their own Thoughts) especially in divers Passions tending to the rectifying the disorderly Will, where perhaps they cannot be said to be more sensible of any thing, than of God's acting strongly upon them, and that not barely in making Impressions on their Understandings, and no more, where they merely suffer the Objects; but by those Impressions giving the clearest and mightiest Arguments to perswade and change their Volitions, and better determine the Acts of their Wills, their own proper Actions.

Again, Every Man if he considers will find he has a Will as it were disproportionable to any thing in himself, or in other Creatures; a mighty Desire, feeling

feeling as it were after ſomething that can ſatisfie, and fill it with a kind of Perfection of Satisfaction. This boundleſs and unwearied Deſire, that cannot fill it-ſelf with any imperfect thing, muſt have another manner of Object, and muſt have a Cauſe, and none but that Cauſe can be the Object ſufficient to ſatisfie it. Whence could there be ſuch a Deſire, if there were no Object ſuitable? and if the Cauſe of this Deſire had not made it to be ſatisfied, or capable to be ſatisfied, he had made it in vain; but he is ſuppos'd perfect, and ſo can do nothing in vain, or to no purpoſe, for ſo to do is an Imperfection: Now if this Deſire be to be ſatisfied, when ever it is ſo, it cannot be inſenſible, or want Experience, of its Satisfaction; for ſo to ſuppoſe would be to ſuppoſe it not ſatisfied, and none can ſatisfie it but its ſufficient Cauſe, that is God; therefore there is poſſible, yea ſometimes actually, (in thoſe who have been convinced of the Inſufficiency of imperfect Beings) a Perception or Thought, and that a ſenſible one, of God; if Senſibility be not unduely confin'd to the Reception of thoſe Thoughts, we have by Occaſion, and Means of Body.

That all Bodily Nature is inſufficient, and muſt have a Cauſe or Beginning, I need not urge, when we our ſelves, what-ever we are, find our ſelves imperfect, and ſo that we cannot be without one.

6. We are come ſo far as by conſidering our ſelves as Imperfect, or Inſufficient Beings, to find that we cannot be of our ſelves, Uncauſed, but muſt of neceſſity have a Sufficient Cauſe; which is all one as to ſay that there is a God our Author; and in doing this, we have alſo found in ſome meaſure what we are, and what He is: I ſhall now go on to conſider a little more largely both our ſelves and God, as to what kind of Beings we are, and what God may, and muſt rationally be thought to be. And as, I

ſay,

ſay, I ſhall conſider, and conſider our ſelves firſt, I ſay.

Firſt, We are Conſiderers; What is Conſidering? It is Thinking, and he that conſiders, or thinks ſeriouſly, will find nothing which he can properly call Himſelf but Thinking, or his Mind. That Organick Frame or Body of a Man, is not the Poſſeſſor of a Mind, or the ſelf-uſing a Mind, but a thing the Mind, or Cogitation uſes, that which ſaith, I, Me, Mine, is the Mind, and nothing elſe. And tho' Thinking is call'd by divers Names, as Soul, Mind, Underſtanding, Will, Memory, Conſcience, *&c.* yet it is all the while but one thing, Thinking: The principal Diverſity of which, we can poſſibly make, is but according to its divers Applications to its Objects; which if well conſider'd can be but two, 1ſt. Underſtanding, 2d. Will: Or in other words, Knowledge and Deſire. Under theſe two Heads or Diviſions, come all the Modes of Thinking. The threefold Diviſion of our Mind into Underſtanding, Conſcience and Will, which ſome make, and call the Threefoldneſs of a Creature, is not Good, but a Miſtake; for Conſcience differs not from Underſtanding, but in reſpect of the Objects. Other things, or Self; for whether I know my own Thoughts, or know any other thing, it is Knowledge ſtill; the Underſtanding is underſtanding as much when apply'd to one Object, as when apply'd to another; Conſcience is but another name for Underſtanding, when apply'd to one's own Thoughts: So Memory is but the Thinking again that we thought before of ſuch or ſuch a thing. I need name no more, any one may find who conſiders the matter, that our Knowledge of things, and the Acts of our Wills, or our Deſires about them, are the two eſſential Parts, or rather Modes, or Properties, we can make in any Mind; and yet Knowing

ing and Desiring, or if you like better the words Understanding and Will, (what-ever the Object of either may be, or the manner of their Application) is still but one Thinking; and my Thinking is one, and the same Being, whatever Mode or Object it hath; and what I call my Mind or Soul, my Self or Person: So that Understanding and Will are essential to a Person, or Intelligent Being; this Duality, and nothing else, or but what is reduceable to these. Where there is these there is a Person, and what-ever is more, or other than these, is not of the Essence of a Person, or Intelligent Being. Those that make Understanding and Conscience two things in God, consider'd in himself, calling them two Modes or Relations, or the like, (as some witty Men have done) have not consider'd the matter closely. For where there is nothing but God, (and nothing else is necessary and eternal) his knowing himself or Conscience, is the only necessary or essential Understanding, there being no other Object. So that to consider God, as having necessarily or essentially an Understanding, other and distinct from Reflection or Knowing himself, is but to give him so no Understanding, and comes to no Distinction at all. That original Mind or Wisdom which some Wise Men of late talk of as something other than what they call Reflex Wisdom, or God's Knowing himself, considering God solitary, and in himself, is just no Wisdom, his self being the only Object; unless they perswade themselves that his thinking on Creatures is his Original Wisdom, which I suppose they will hardly dare to do, but this by the way.

Against this Notion, That Thinking is the very Essence of the Mind or Soul, the very Person or Self, I find two principal Objections.

7. First,

Firſt, That Thinking is not that which is real, ſubſtantial, or conſtant enough to be the Soul or Mind.

Secondly, That it is but an Act, and requires an Agent, or an Attribute requiring a Subject; which Agent or Subject, is more likely to be the Soul or Mind.

To which firſt, I anſwer, That Thinking of any thing we can imagine, is moſt real and conſtant; for we may ſuppoſe Bodies not really exiſtent, but only in imagination, (and there is no notion we have of any thing but Body, and Thinking, wherefore we cannot honeſtly ſuppoſe any thing elſe) but we cannot ſuppoſe Thinking to have no Being, becauſe while we ſuppoſe, or think, we are ſure it is actually preſent, we may ſuppoſe we might have been without the Ideas, or Figure-thoughts of Bodies, or any Thoughts that come by occaſion of them, as we find ſometimes we are. We may alſo ſuppoſe Bodies not to have been, and yet we be, they being not neceſſary Beings; and if they had not been, we muſt have always been without the Ideas of them: For if we try we ſhall find it as hard, as if we conſider unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that we can frame, or ſtir up in our ſelves Thoughts of things that are not, as that we can bring things into actual Being, or Create, the Creating of Perceptions of things, I will call it, being to be done by the ſame Power as the Creating of things themſelves. And we may ſuppoſe God himſelf, being an Almighty Mind, might have created Minds without Bodies, the Notion of a Mind, or Cogitation, not neceſſarily including Body or quantity. But to return; As we find Thinking ſo real or truly exiſtent, that we experience its Exiſtence when-ever we conſider it, and cannot ſuppoſe any thing to be without ſuppoſing Self-exiſtent Cogitation, or Almighty Mind, ſo as

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to the continual, or perpetual Exiſtence even of our Thinking, [I do not mean as apply'd to any one Object, for it is variable, and inconſtant in that reſpect; and as it is a Creature cannot be apply'd to many, or all its Objects at once, and yet it is ſtill Thinking, what-ever it is apply'd to:] As to its Continuation, I ſay, we know of no time ſince we began to think, or have a Being, wherein we did not think; for what-ever we remember, we remember we thought on, Memory being but thinking over the ſame Thought, with reflection on it; and tho' we do not remember what we thought on at ſuch or ſuch a day, or hour, yet we are ſure we then thought, or were thinking: To be ſhort, we are ſure we continually think except in ſleep, ſay ſome, which ſeems to be the chief Objection againſt continual Thinking. To which, I ſay, we think always, one Thought ſtill following another, Sleeping and Waking, but we ſoon forget all thoſe Thoughts that make no conſiderable Impreſſion on our Wills, or whereby we are very little affected. In the continual Succeſſion of Thoughts we experience when we are awake, great numbers go as faſt as they come, without being dwelt on, or repeated, of thoſe Objects that very little affect us, and ſo are preſently forgot, and are as if they had not been, or as if the Objects had not been in our Mind. Beſides, as a great, if not the greateſt number of our Thoughts are of, and by the means of, external things let in by the Organs of the Senſes, which are as Conditions (in this life at leaſt) of our receiving ſuch Cogitations, the Indiſpoſition of the Senſes, or want of thoſe Conditions, leaves us without thoſe Thoughts, if wholly indiſpos'd; but if only in part, the Thoughts are weak, and paſs unremembred, and not reflected on, and ſo are by ſome inconſiderately ſuppos'd not to have been; But tho' our Eyes are ſhut in ſleep,

and

and we then ſee nothing, we have viſible Ideas ſometimes from the Remembrance of things ſeen, tho' confuſed, (for no one born blind, and ſo continuing, ever dreams he ſees;) yet the other Senſes are not quite laid by, we feel, hear, and ſmell, *&c.* tho' but remiſſly, and our Thoughts or Perceptions are but faint, and ſo it is no wonder if we forget them as faſt as they paſs, and ſo ſuppoſe we had none. And which to me makes the matter paſt doubt; I have diſcours'd with a Perſon faſt aſleep, who hath anſwer'd me diſtinctly to many Queſtions, without ſo much as dreaming of any thing that was ſaid. But moreover, if we do not think when aſleep, we do neither underſtand, nor will, or which is the ſame, have no Underſtanding or Will, but every Morning; or perhaps twice or thrice every Night a new Mind; for Underſtanding that underſtands not, or Will that wills not, is no Underſtanding or Will, but an Abſurdity: And it is the ſame as to ſay, I am Thinking, and yet do not think. But we remember we think ſometimes in ſleep, and that ſtrongly; and though moſt commonly it is but weakly, yet it is Thinking. And ſuch weak Thinking we may ſuppoſe a Child in the Womb may have; none perhaps but what comes by Feeling or Taſting, I ſpeak according to the common Meaning; for all Senſes are but different ways of Feeling, and yet the very Ideas that come by the groſſeſt of the Senſes are Thoughts ſtill, it being the Mind that perceives, not the Body.

From theſe Conſiderations, to name no more, we may be perſwaded that we always think, tho' we don't always reflect and remember our Thoughts, and ſo that Thinking is real and conſtant.

But to the ſecond Objection, That Thinking is but an Act of ſomething elſe, the Agent, or an Attribute of ſomething, elſe the Subject.

I anſwer, Firſt by demanding what this more real and noble Agent is? What Notion have we of it? I have long try'd, and can find nothing an Object of my Underſtanding but either Thinking, or Body; what others may chance to do, who never try'd, and are reſolved they never will, I know not. Let them tell us what thought they have of it, different from Body and Thinking, if they can: But if neither they, nor we have any notion of ſuch a third Being, we cannot with any reaſon affirm any thing of it, or that ſuch a thing is. If they have any thought of it, they have ſome knowledge of it, and ſo need not acknowledge themſelves at ſuch a loſs, as they commonly do when this Queſtion is put them, What is the Soul? or expoſe themſelves as they commonly do, by talking of that whoſe Eſſence they acknowledge themſelves wholly ignorant of. But if any ſuppoſe Thinking an Action, or Attribute of Body, or that it is Body ſome way or other poſited, or moved, (how they cannot tell) that is Thinking, or that (as they rather would ſay) thinks; they muſt ſuppoſe Body more noble as the Cauſe, or Agent, which I believe they will hardly do. But we can ſuppoſe Body not to be; we may be ignorant of it, and yet think, which could not be if it were Body that thinks; beſides, if Body thinks, it knows it ſelf to think, and ſo the Diſpute is at an end; but Body does not know it ſelf to think, becauſe it is doubted whether it thinks or no: Whatever thinks cannot be ignorant of its Thinking, nor can any thing be well thought to be an Agent, that is ignorant of its being ſo, or does not will to be ſo. If Body could be ſuppos'd to think, and know it ſelf to think, it would be Thinking, conſequently not Body; for of Body and Thinking, there are wholly different Notions. But Body we affirm to be no Agent of any thing, or Creator of Ideas, or Thoughts;

God

God alone muſt be ſuppoſ'd, with good reaſon, to be the Cauſe and Contriver of our Thinking. As we find our Thoughts do not cauſe our Body, much leſs can we ſuppoſe Body to cauſe our Thoughts, or act any thing in us; our Body is moved according to our Will, and our Will and Underſtanding is often affected by means of our Body, but Body is not the Cauſe or Agent of either. Beſides, one half of our Thoughts are Paſſions; nothing but our Deſires, or the Application of our Will about Objects, ſeems properly our Action. And tho' Thinking be look'd on as an Attribute requiring a Subject different, we may as well ſuppoſe an eſſential Attribute, or Attribute that is Identical, the ſame with the thing it ſelf in the created Mind, as to ſay what-ever is in God, is God, or that there is not another thing, which is not Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Power, *&c.* which is God; in which Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Power, *&c.* reſide as things accidental. Nor is it ſo ſtrange an Expreſſion as that it may not be admitted to ſay, *Cogitatio eſt cogitans*, or Thinking thinks; for in truth I take it to be the ſame as to ſay, Thinking is Thinking, which is no worſe than an Identical Propoſition.

But to leave this Queſtion, (with theſe few touches to give others occaſion to conſider) as beſides my main purpoſe, I ſhall paſs to that Knowledge of our ſelves which moſt concerns us; and even that Knowledge is the Knowledge of our ſelves as Thinking, and that as Thinking well or ill. If our Thoughts are well in order, that ſomething elſe, that ſome fancy is the Agent of the Action Thinking in us, that unknown Soul, that Chimera, or that Body whoſe Particles are very far from one another, or friggle about very nimblely, (ſuch is the common Notion of a Spirit) is of little value. If my Thoughts are duely apply'd to their due Objects, I care not for that unknowable Soul; for it is in the right order of our

our Thoughts that Happineſs conſiſts, and whereby we come to attain the End of our Being.

8. Having thus found our ſelves to be imperfect Minds, variable, limited, caus'd or created Cogitations: let us conſider our Cauſe, or Creator, and that Firſt, as he muſt needs be thought to be in himſelf, and then we ſhall the more fully diſcover the Second thing, (which hath been partly diſcours'd already) What he is to us. And the firſt notion that occurs to my Mind of God, or the Cauſe of cauſed inſufficient things, as conſider'd in himſelf, is, That he is Self-ſufficient, or Self exiſtent. Having found my ſelf inſufficient, and conſequently that I muſt have a Cauſe ſufficient to be ſo, which he could not be were he himſelf cauſed, it conſequently follows he is ſufficient for himſelf, or ſelf-exiſtent, tho' I were not. And as I muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe him, becauſe I could not be without him, ſo he muſt neceſſarily be ſelf-ſufficient or exiſtent, tho' I ſhould ceaſe to be.

From the Conſideration of God's being Self-ſufficient, it appears he is but one; for if he be Sufficient, another is not neceſſary, and that which is not abſolutely neceſſary, or may be ſuppos'd not to be, is not God. If one be ſufficient of himſelf, another is to no purpoſe, or not neceſſary; one ſuch Being muſt be ſuppos'd, but there is no need to ſuppoſe another. If God is one Self-ſufficient, Self-exiſtent Being, he is but one Self, or Mind. He cannot properly ſay I, Thou, and He of himſelf, or of any thing in his Eſſence, but always I; nor can we ſay Thou and Thou, or He and He of him, if we ſpeak properly and truly.

Again, if he is neceſſarily Self ſufficient, he muſt conſequently know himſelf, and will, or love himſelf, deſire himſelf, be pleas'd, and ſatisfied with himſelf, with the Knowledge and Love of himſelf, and ſo be a Thinking Being, Mind or Perſon. Other,

either Persons or Things, therefore are not necessary to him who is satisfied with himself, no not so much as in Imagination, Notion, or Thought; nor needed he produce any of them.

From God's Knowing and Loving himself, ariseth the Notion of the highest Wisdom and Goodness, or that he is most Wise and most Good. He that is necessarily Self-sufficient, and so has more Reality or Being than all other Beings, (supposing them made) must needs in knowing himself have the greatest, as well as the only necessary Knowledge; and in loving himself have the highest, and only necessary Goodness. For he that has most of Being, most Perfection and Reality, is the greatest Object of Knowledge, and most desireable, most to be loved; and while he does not, create the only Object of Knowledge and Desire.

And here ariseth the Notion of God's Essential Justice, That he love himself, and approve himself; because he is most worthy, it is most right and just that he love himself chiefly, and only necessarily; he is not so obliged to love his Creatures, when he hath made them, he cannot love them as himself, because he knows they are not so good, nor does he necessarily love them, because they are not necessary to be.

From God's Self-sufficiency is seen also the Notion of his absolute Felicity, or perfect Happiness, or absolute Perfection, admitting no increase or decrease; for he that is enough to himself, that needs seek nothing out of himself, must needs be most happy.

Again; He that is Self-sufficient necessarily so, can suffer no Alteration, nor can he cause any in himself; and hence ariseth the Notion of Eternity, an Attribute only belonging, and essential to God; the consideration of the manner of God's Being as having no Succession or Alteration, but being still the same;

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he does not think one thing now, another thing anon, forgeting one thing while he thinks another, as Creatures do who are insufficient, to be all they are at once; but he is always compleat, or sufficient; has not something ceasing, and another thing succeeding in his Essential Perfections.

From the Unity or Simplicity of God, we are inform'd he is immaterial, a Spiritual Being or Mind. All the former Considerations imply God to be intelligent and voluntary; that is, Thinking. Now Thinking and Body being two things wholly different, the Notions of them being not at all the same, God cannot be both, if he is one simple or single Being. Those that fancy Thinking and Body is the same, or that Thinking is, or may be some Mode of Body, as some certain degree of Rarifaction or Motion, would do excellently to certifie us, just at how much distance the Particles of a Congeries of Matter must be, or how fast they must be stir'd to the Production of Thought: One Particle cannot be suppos'd to be rarified, or less sollid than another, and consequently cannot by Rarifaction attain Thought; and how many of them must dance together to that end, or what Jigg, he would be a curious Master that should discover. Till which is done, we shall be confident that Knowing, Perceiving, Desiring, or Loving, are not Quantity, Figure, or Motion, (it being Nonsense to say a Pound, or an Ell of Knowledge, or Love;) but different names of the one thing Thinking: And Quantity, Figure, and Motion are not Thinking, but essential, or belonging to Body; so that Thinking and Body are two things. Now, as has been said, God cannot be both these, because they are two wholly different things, and God is but one.

God cannot be Body, because he knows himself, and has no Ignorance in him; Body knows not it

ſelf, to ſpeak improperly in calling it ſelf. If Body did know, there is no reaſon why all Body ſhould not know; and we have the greateſt reaſon to affirm ſome Body to be ignorant. If God did not know himſelf, he could not be happy, wiſe, or ſo much as intelligent. Knowing is Thinking, not Body or Quantity, therefore God is a Mind, and not a Body. Farther, he is not a Mind and a Body, for ſo he would be a Compound, or Congeries of divers things or parts. Again, whatever conſiſts of Body and Mind has ſome Imperfection, and conſequently is but a Creature; God is all Perfect, or Self-ſufficient. Body is not ſo much as a Perſon, or Self. God cannot be ſomething beſides himſelf, or beſides his Perſon; Body is but a Thing, Mind only, and alone is a Perſon. If God's Perſon, Self or Mind, is ſufficient, he is not Body alſo; for Body is not neceſſary to the Conſideration of Mind, eſpecially of Self-ſufficient Mind; nor is it neceſſary at all, being imperfect, therefore God neither is, nor has a Body. Beſides, God cannot be a Body, or a Compound, forwhat ever is ſo may have more or leſs; Body may be more or leſs, or otherwiſe in Figure or Motion, God cannot be more or leſs, or otherwiſe than he is. The greateſt, or all Body, may be ſuppos'd to receive an Addition, and the leaſt to ceaſe to be. But God (as has been ſaid) can have no Alteration, or Imperfection, or unneceſſary thing in his Being, therefore Body can be nothing of his Being. Finally, Body is viſible; God is inviſible: Body is finite, or ſo much, and no more; God is infinite or unbounded, not in Extenſion, but, which is a better Notion of Infinity, he is all Perfection; to us incomprehenſible, for Quantity does not belong to God's Infinity.

So that to ſum up all, God conſider'd in himſelf, is the Self-ſufficient or Self-exiſtent, neceſſary Mind, know-

knowing himſelf, loving himſelf, ſatisfied with himſelf, the only neceſſary Being, in whom is no Diverſity or Compoſition, or any thing but what may be ſuppoſed in mere Cogitation, *viz.* all Perfect Underſtanding and Will.

9. But if God be an all Perfect Being, a meer Mind, and not a Body, or not ſo much as partly Body (as I think is evident) that Opinion of his Omnipreſence that ſuppoſes him locally preſent, or eſſentially preſent in Bodily Nature, is untrue: For whatſoever is ſuppos'd to be in place is Body, or Quantity, has Dimenſion, or is nothing. Thinking has no Dimenſions, Quantities or Bulks, and can be ſaid to be preſent with Bodies only as having Ideas of them, or willing about them, as they may be Objects of the Underſtanding or Will. So God is preſent with Bodies only as he knows them all, and wills about them. He is ſaid to be eminently preſent here or there, as the Effects of his Will are ſeen more eminently in one place, than in another. He is more intimately preſent with Minds, becauſe he does not only think of all that is in them, and continually wills about them, but that they alſo are often very ſenſible of the Acts of his Will about them, which Bodies are not: But he is eſpecially preſent with himſelf, becauſe he always is the chief and neceſſary Object of his own Underſtanding and Will. But an Eſſential local Omnipreſence is abſurd; for if God be a Body, as he muſt if locally omnipreſent, it would follow that there is no Body beſides God; for if you ſuppoſe Bodies that are not God, they muſt have ſome place among one another; which cannot be if God fill all with himſelf, two things each of which fill a place, cannot be ſuppos'd in the ſame place. And to ſuppoſe God every where among Bodies, will not make local Omnipreſence; but Interſperſion, whereby he would be ſuppos'd as

a porous Body, filling the void ſpaces between other Bodies, which would be a very fooliſh Thought if we think it of God. Beſides, whatever fills any thing, fills it with its whole, or with but part of it; if God fills any, or all Bodily Creatures with his whole in this local way, he himſelf is contained, and ſo according to this fooliſh fancy is wholly finite, they being finite. If he fill them with a part of himſelf, he is preſent but in part not wholly, and ſo is partly finite; which is abſurd. Nor can Bodily Nature be ſaid to be infinite even in Extenſion, becauſe it conſiſts of Parts; and where there are Parts there is a whole; and that of which it can be ſaid here is all, may be ſuppos'd capable of Addition, and ſo is not infinite. But nothing can with good Senſe be ſaid to be in all places, but all Bodies; and Place is nothing but the relation of Bodies to one another, as containing and contain'd, on this ſide or that. God's more excellent and real Omnipreſence is virtual, as we have ſaid; and his Infinity is nothing of the nature of Out-ſtretchedneſs, (whatever is extended being finite) but is the boundleſs or abſolute Perfection of all his Attributes, incomprehenſible to our created and limitted Conception. And he was the ſame, infinite, or compleat, when he had not made Body, (and conſequently there was no ſpace or place;) or any other Creature to be in, or preſent with, and he cannot be beholding to Creatures for any neceſſary Perfection. He fills Heaven and Earth, it is true, but not with himſelf, but with the Bodies they contain; Bodies, I ſay, becauſe no Minds are capable of Place, or Being contained by Body, or here or there among Bodies, otherwiſe than as thinking of Bodies that are here and there.

Now whatever God is in himſelf, is that without which he can't be conceived, and that which is neceſſary

ceſſary and eſſential to him, and implies him a neceſſary Being.

10. But as to what he is in relation to Creatures, or unneceſſary Beings, that might have had no Being, he is Indifferent, or Arbitrary, which is the ſecond way of conſidering him we now come to. What he is in relation to Creatures, he is not neceſſarily or eſſentially; becauſe he was indifferent to cauſe them, or not, no neceſſity compell'd him to produce them. They are not neceſſary Beings, they may be ſuppos'd not to be; and if they had not been, he had had no relation to them. Neither the Exiſtence, no nor the very Ideas or Thoughts of Creatures, or unneceſſary Beings, can be ſuppos'd neceſſary to the Divine Mind, while we ſuppoſe him Self-ſufficient. So that to be a Creator or Father, a Lord or Governour, is not neceſſary or eſſential to God; but he freely chooſeth or pleaſeth ſo to be. God muſt be ſuppos'd Self-ſufficient, or he cannot be ſuppos'd to be, and Creatures muſt be acknowledged not Self-ſufficient, or they cannot be ſuppos'd Creatures; if ſo, there can be no neceſſary relation between God and Creatures. There can be nothing but God and Creatures, and ſo God can be related to nothing but Creatures; relations are of divers things. The Notion of Relation is what one individual thing is, if compar'd to another. Creatures may be related as Individuals of the ſame kind, but God and Creatures cannot be ſo related; they are infinitely different, Relations muſt have their Correlates indeed; but where the Relations were not neceſſary, the Correlate depends on the Relation ſuppos'd; one Individual cannot be relate and correlate, ſo that there can be no relation eſſential in God. God is but one Self, or Mind, and there can be nothing in God different from himſelf; he is but one Individual, not Individuals, or elſe the Divine Nature could not be

called He; one eſſential Property, or Attribute in God, cannot be related to another eſſential Property or Attribute, as a Cauſer, Creator, or Begetter. God's Underſtanding cannot have the relation of a Cauſe, Father or Lord, to his Will, or his Will to his Underſtanding. The Cauſe, or Begetter, or Lord, muſt be ſuppos'd before, or greater than the Effect Begotten, and Subject: but nothing in God's eſſential Properties can be ſaid to be before, the Cauſe of, or greater than another; nor can one of them properly ſay thou to another, they all being one ſelf-ſame, or Mind. God's Fatherhood might rather be ſaid to have the relation of an Effect to his Will the Cauſe; for he was not a Father as he would not, but becauſe he will'd to be ſo; ſo that Fatherhood more properly is a Notion reſulting from the Exiſtence of things he hath willed into being.

Again, God could not be a neceſſary or eternal Creator, Producer or Father; becauſe things created, produced or begotten, would on that Suppoſition be eternal and neceſſary. But Creating, Produceing and Begetting, imply Cauſe and Effect, and nothing eſſential to God can be an Effect, or thing cauſed; an Effect or thing cauſed was not before it was cauſed; and it would be the greateſt Abſurdity to ſuppoſe ſomething in the Divine Eſſence, which was not. This would contradict the Notion of Eternity, or the manner of Being that hath no fore and after in it, or any alteration. God alone is ſuch: The Creatures all of them have ſomething paſt, and to come; what ever has any thing paſt, and to come, in its nature is a Creature, had a beginning, might have had none, and may have an end. Whatever has a former and a later, had a firſt, and may have a laſt. Nor can Fatherhood, or Creatorſhip, be thought an eſſential Attribute in God, becauſe whatever is in God's Nature is a neceſſary

ceſſary Perfection, and he cannot be ſuppos'd to receive any ſuch Perfection from the Effects he hath produced, which he had not before, which would be in effect to deny him to be a Self-ſufficient Being. Nor can we with any conſideration ſay, God might have made things ſooner or later; for when he did make then began the firſt moment, there being no fore and after in God, from which time could be named.

Now tho' the Attributes of Creator, Cauſe or Father, began with Time, reſulting from things related to God, as Products and Effects, there cannot be ſaid to be any alteration in God, or increaſe of his Perfections; the things that are made are but the Images, Pictures, or Characters of his Perfections; and he is not any thing more, ſince he has painted out ſome of his Excellencies, than he was before. Nor can God be ſuppos'd ignorant for not knowing what is not; mere not being, is no Object of Knowledge; God knowing himſelf only, knew all when there was nothing elſe to know; and knowing all that now is, he can't be ſaid to be ignorant for not knowing more than all, yet we dare not ſay he cannot produce more Creatures: when he alone was, he knew himſelf the Original and Fountain of all Perfection, and knew himſelf able to paint out, or make Pictures of his Perfections, and when he will'd them they were; but before he will'd them to be, they can't well be thought Objects of his Underſtanding.

Now tho' God may be ſuppos'd ſolitary, or ſingly in himſelf, without any real relation, without ſo much as the Thoughts of Creatures in himſelf, the Creatures cannot poſſibly be ſuppos'd to be without ſuppoſing their relation to God as their Creator or Father. As it is our experience that we are, and that we find by conſideration that God muſt be, or we

could

could not be, it presently appears what he is to us, *viz.* our Cause, our Maker, Producer, or Father, and consequently that he is our Owner, Sovereign, Lord, and Ruler. He that knows us perfectly, both as to what he hath made us, and what his Ends are in making us: He cannot be suppos'd to make any thing of which he is ignorant in either of these respects; he must also be suppos'd to have Will and Power, [yet Will and Power in God are properly but two words for the same thing] and his Power or Will to make, must be agreeable to his Wisdom or Knowledge how, or what would best become him. He could make nothing but what would be an agreeable Representation of himself, fit for such a Being to make, such as would represent him as he is, and that must needs be good. He could make nothing ill, there could be no disorder in his Works: It cannot be said that any thing might have been done better than he did it, either as to the manner or end of being.

11. The final Cause or End for which God made things, (if it be not Presumption to enquire) seems to be no other than the Manifestation of his Wisdom and Power, and the Communication of his Goodness to his Creatures; for in respect to God there can be no final Cause, God being all perfect and happy in himself that is Self sufficient, there can no good or end come to him from any thing; but we would rather say, he acted as became him when he pleas'd to make Creatures, and some of them such as were capable by considering themselves, and other things they find to be made by the same power to acknowledge and admire him, and to move one another to acknowledge, and admire his Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, so conspicuous in the curious and mighty System of the Creation; and in so doing, to be pleas'd or happy. God being in himself absolute

Good;

Goodneſs, and ſo perfectly happy or pleas'd with himſelf, was pleas'd to make Creatures capable of Happineſs, or Pleaſure, by the Communication of his Goodneſs; who is not only good, or perfect enough in himſelf to be altogether happy or pleas'd, but his Goodneſs is alſo enough to make a world of Creatures happy, or pleas'd alſo by having Him the Object of their Underſtanding and Will. The Creature experiencing God's Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, being duly affected with it, and endeavouring to affect its Fellows, is ſaid to glorifie God, not to make him glorious; that is, ſhewing forth Perfections, but to ſee him ſuch, and be an Inſtrument to cauſe him to be ſeen ſuch. God being eſſentially Wiſe, Good, and Powerful, that is Knowing, and Loving himſelf, and able to make Repreſentations of his Excellencies, if he pleaſe to make any things, cannot but make them ſuch as become him, *viz.* good, and for good; that is ſuch as are capable of being pleas'd with being what, and how he hath made them, and wills them to be; that is, Knowers and Lovers of him.

So that there appears in God, as conſidered in relation to us chiefly, Power in producing us, Wiſdom and Goodneſs as to the what, and to what end he hath made us. What God is, and will be found to be to us, conſidered as otherwiſe than he wills us, may come to be conſidered better hereafter in another place; nor ſhall we here enlarge, theſe Conſiderations having laid them but as Foundations or Principles.

12. We ſhall now come to conſider what we ought to be, or how we ſhould behave our ſelves to God, and for God's ſake to one another. And this Obligation is that which is properly call'd Religion.

Man

Man having by conſidering himſelf, found God, or his own Cauſe; having found what God is and does, in himſelf, and in relation to us, what he has caus'd us to be, who are nothing of our ſelves, the great Queſtion that concerns us is, *What we ought, or what it becomes us to do?* And that is in ſhort, to exerciſe our Wills aright, that is ſuitable to, or becoming the Relation we ſtand in to God, and one another: ſo as becomes ſuch Creatures of ſuch a Creator. We are ſure he cannot be, or act towards us, but as becomes him, that is beſt.

And that we may do this our Duty aright, we ought firſt to ſeek God, that is ſtudy to know him more and more, that the regular Acts of our Wills may be ſtronger and ſtronger: for the more truely and clearly we behold him the Object, the more orderly and the more ſtrongly will the Acts of our Wills be about him.

Now God being an abſolutely perfect Being, and conſequently one who can have no Acts of Will, but ſuch as become himſelf, or are pefectly good in relation to himſelf and his Works, our willing ſuitably or orderly is determin'd, and made ſuch by the Conformity of our Wills to the Will of God, willing as he wills we ſhould.

Now to will what God wills us to will, is the Eſſence, Sum, and Subſtance of all Religion: I do not ſay Religions, for Religion is but one, even this one thing; and there is not properly any falſe Religion. For if Religion is nothing but the Obligation to will as God wills us to will, whatever is not according to God's Will, is no Obligation, and tho' call'd Religion, is not ſo, but a Miſtake.

This therefore, *To will as God wills*, we muſt fix as the general comprehenſive Rule of our Obligation, Religion or Duty. And in order to the Compliance with this Obligation, or Payment of this Debt,

Debt, there are theſe things to be conſider'd.

Firſt, We ought to be willing, and ſo endeavour, to know what God wills concerning us. Then having found in particular what God wills, we ſhall conſider how it appears that to will thoſe things that God wills, moſt becomes us, is our greateſt Obligation and Happineſs.

13. Theſe things we ſhall diſcourſe a little more particularly.

Firſt, That we ſhould will to know, or be willing to enquire what God wills.

Having found, or rather knowing certainly that God has will'd our Being, and conſider'd what we find our ſelves, and that God has ſhew'd himſelf powerful, wiſe, and good, in cauſing us; it naturally follows that the Creature finding himſelf an Agent, or capable of acting, and inclinable to be doing, ſhould ſome how or other direct his Actions. Now in as much as he finds himſelf imperfect, but a Work or Effect of a higher Being exceeding him in Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power; it alſo rationally follows that this Being, *viz.* God, his Maker, muſt needs know better than he, what he has made him, and what is moſt fit, or beſt for him to do: And that he may know, and do what is beſt for him to do, he had need (as aboveſaid) be willing to know it. For altho' we know many things without, or even againſt the Acts of our Wills, yet it is apparent, that for want of Will or Deſire, we don't know many things that we might and ought to know, and ſo alſo looſe ſome Happineſs we might enjoy. We find various Subjects of conſideration offer'd us, and lying before us; and we have power to apply our Minds to this or that, as more neceſſary to be conſidered.

Now as it is evident that the Will of him that is moſt wiſe, muſt needs be beſt, it follows that we ought

ought (even on the account of Intereſt) to deſire, or ſeek to know it. But the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity of ſuch a ſearch, will more appear in our finding out, by conſideration (as we may) particularly what the Will of God is.

And here the firſt Act of Will orderly conſider'd in God, is in and towards himſelf, without relation to any Creature, as he is before, and without them, and that muſt needs be Good-will, or Love to, and Approbation of himſelf, and Pleaſure in himſelf, being a ſufficient or all-perfect Being. Now if he loves, approves, or is pleas'd with himſelf above all, as he is beſt, and only neceſſary; he wills we ſhould to our Capacity have like Thoughts of him, *viz.* that we ſhould love him, approve of him, eſteem him, be pleas'd with him above all; that is, think of him as he is, and not otherwiſe; for to think otherwiſe, is unjuſt or a Lye. That which is moſt excellent, that which is beſt, is to be loved beſt, is moſt deſirable, ſuch is God, or the firſt Cauſe. He is that Being that has moſt, yea all abſolute Perfections. It is juſt and good for God to love himſelf beſt, becauſe there can be no better Object. And it is juſt for us to love, or deſire, and eſteem him better, or more than our ſelves, or any thing elſe, becauſe he is better, yea beſt: It lies as an Obligation in Juſtice that our Deſires ought to go out after him, and tend to him more than after, or to our ſelves, or any thing elſe, not only becauſe he is the only Object that can ſatisfie, where Intereſt comes in, and has our ſelf at the bottom, but becauſe he is in himſelf infinitely more excellent, it is his due.

True Love is of that nature, as to go out from ſelf where it finds an Object more excellent and deſireable, and to prefer the Will of that more excellent Object to its own Will, and the Pleaſure of that more excellent Object to its own pleaſure, as diſtinct from

from it. Where the Creature's Will moſt agrees with the Will of its Creator, the Creature acts rather becauſe its Maker wills it ſo to act, then becauſe its own advantage is in the Action; the Creator, and his Will and Pleaſure, being infinitely more valuable than the Creature's Will and Pleaſure, or very Being. But the Creature agreeing with the Will of God in loving him beſt, cannot poſſibly but find its greateſt Advantage and Pleaſure therein; and the more it goes out of ſelf, the more it turns its Eye and Deſire, from its ſelf, towards God that infinite Good, the leſs it beholds ſelf, and thinks of, or acts as for advantage; as the more noble the Action is, ſo the more Happineſs it finds. And if Juſtice is not enough to perſwade us that God is to be loved, rather becauſe it is our Duty, or his due as he is beſt in himſelf, than becauſe we have pleaſure in loving him; the very Happineſs or Pleaſure will tell us afterwards, that it comes moſt by that juſt and noble Neglect of ſeeking it in compariſon of God, or making him but ſubſervient thereto. And indeed the Creatures will ſeems to be made ſo large, and as it were unproportionable to all the reſt in the Creature, that it cannot poſſibly, as well as ought not to endeavour to be ſatisfied with acting in, towards, and for it ſelf. And from this Greatneſs of the created Deſire is ſeen the ſupreme Cauſe, Reaſon, and Excellency of the Creature's Love to God to be, becauſe God is in himſelf moſt excellent, (we on this account owe him the the firſt and greateſt Offering) and not chiefly, becauſe we are happy, or our deſire filled in ſo doing; the higher Love (I mean in a Creature to God) is a love of Juſtice, a Duty of being juſt and true; before which if the Love for Intereſt come, it is in the ſight of God an unworthy and impure Offering: Tho' we are highly obliged to love God out of Gratitude for his Benefits, yet if we love God moſt, or think we are obliged

obliged to love him moſt becauſe we receive Good from him, we love him for ſelf-ſake, and conſequently love ſelf beſt, tho' it is not beſt, which is the very root of evil, in which we belye both God and Self. The Creature complying with God's Will always finds its advantage, and ſo alſo is bound as to a debt, to love God in gratitude; but ſelf muſt have but the ſecond place, becauſe it is a Creature conſequent to the Creator's Will, and but an imperfect thing; which in its ſelf has alſo an evident Indication that it is not to be beſt beloved, becauſe of its incapacity of ſatisfying its own Deſire; but it is moſt fully ſatisfied, and perfectly pleas'd, (I mean as a Creature can be) in acting towards God with a certain noble Neglect of it ſelf, as delighting (if it had any thing to bring to God) rather in giving than in receiving. The Creature being but an Image of God, it is highly reaſonable the Creature ſhould value, and eſteem it ſelf but as ſuch, but ſhould value and eſteem God in Truth and Juſtice, as he is that Self-ſufficient Being, the Creature is but a ſhadow, or Repreſentation of, leaſt the Good or Pleaſure of the Creature be ſet in the place of its Cauſe. In Love is found the height of the Creature's Happineſs, and the Act of giving in the created Deſire, always contends with the Paſſion of receiving, the Creature affects, and is pleaſed in the Act of affecting, and is again pleas'd with the thoughts that its Affection is welcome, or agreeable to the Will of the Affected; but that it's God's Will and Pleaſure we ſhould love him, is a greater reaſon that we ſhould ſo do, than that we are pleas'd in doing it; for God's Will or Pleaſure is better, and more requiſite than ours. When we love God beſt, who we know would be loved, and ſo we ought to love, and who loves us again, or rather firſt, then will be found whatever can be in love poſſible to the Creature.

God

God we rationally believe cannot be profited, or have any encreaſe of pleaſure by us, or our loving him, or looſe any, by the contrary, he being ſufficient in himſelf; but as his own Thoughts are in moſt perfect order, as he thinks aright of himſelf, as he is, knows himſelf, and his own Will, to be moſt high, beſt, *&c.* ſo he loves and likes that the Thoughts of his Creatures ſhould be orderly, or that they ſhould think of him as he is, and of themſelves as they are; and hence as Creatures are many, and whoever loves God, and is happy thereby, cannot but ſuppoſe others capable, to be, and actually are ſuch Agents and Recipients as himſelf; we in loving God for his Benefits muſt never forget to love him, becauſe he is good to others, as well as becauſe he is good to us.

14. Now as God having all abſolute Perfections in himſelf, cannot be ſuppos'd to have any thing diſagreeing in his Will, he muſt needs be ſuppos'd if he work, or make any thing to make it, ſuch as becomes him to make, that is good; and conſequently he muſt be ſuppos'd to love, and approve his Works, he cannot be thought to diſapprove any thing he himſelf does; and what he makes, as his Work cannot be thought unworthy of his Approbation and Good-will, tho' he himſelf is the greateſt and only neceſſary Object to himſelf: And if God, who is moſt wiſe, love and approve his own Works, it is highly reaſonable we his Works ſhould be determin'd by him to do ſo too; and of God's Works it is reaſonable firſt, that we ſhould love our ſelves (as well as we can) with ſuch a Love as God loves us, and eſteem our ſelves with ſuch an Eſteem as God has for us; we ſhould be well pleas'd, and rejoyce in being what God has made us, and be ready to do what ever God wills us to benefit our ſelves, and make us happy, and think of our ſelves juſt as we

 are;

are; that is as nothing in our ſelves, but as the Shadows, Images, and Creatures of God, and not as God's our ſelves, or not as ſuch whoſe pleaſure is the chief thing. Now if we are bound in compliance to the Will of God, as well as by intereſt to our ſelves, to love, or wiſh our ſelves well, and to his Truth and Juſtice to think of our ſelves as we are, to eſteem our ſelves ſuch as God has made us, and be pleas'd in ſo doing; certainly the ſame Will of God obliges us in conformity thereto to love our Fellow Creatures, and be pleas'd with what ever of God's Will, or of Goodneſs, or Truth, or Lovelineſs we ſee in them. God loves them as well as he loves us, as equally good, and excellent with us, as they are as much his Creatures, who are as much his Images, and as near to him as we are, and we ought to imitate God as he is imitable: He is pleas'd with his own Works, as to what he hath made them; ſo we ſhould be pleas'd with, and in them as they are his Works; we ſhould like his Works, and admire him in them; delight in beholding his Wiſdom in making them, and endowing them, as well as in what he hath made us.

And as God is good to his Creatures, and loves them, that are capable of Happineſs, with a Love of Beneficence; ſo we ſhould deſire alſo to be good, and beneficial to them, to endeavour to confer to their Happineſs, becauſe God wills their Happineſs. This Love of Benevolence, or Act of Good-will to our Fellow Creatures, this deſire of being good to them, becauſe God is ſo, and wills us to be ſo, hath not only the Argument of Duty in Conformableneſs to God's Will to perſwade it, but hath alſo that of pleaſure in the very action, greater than any is ready to believe that doth not practice it; and as it lies not idle in the Mind, but is unſatisfied tell it effects ſome Good, if poſſible, to the Object, and confers

to

to its Happineſs, it tends to bring back advantage as it naturally inclines the benefited Perſon to the like Re-action.

But this Love of Beneficence when it moſt nerely imitates God, propoſing no advantage to ſelf, is moſt excellent, and perhaps hath a greater delight attending it than can be found in that Love which is forced by the ſight of Good in the Creatures.

There is alſo a Love of Gratitude when we love them, becauſe their Love and Beneficence to us deſerves it; this Love is juſt, and ſo a Duty, but it is a leſs God-like Love; being grounded in Creature imperfect ſelf, which without the higher Love to keep it right, would become evil: As to love God himſelf merely for his Benefits (if there can be ſuch a Love) would be to make our own Will, our own Pleaſure, the beginning and end of all, to make our Will as ours the chief thing, and God who is infinitely better than we, and other Creatures who are, if not better, as good, but ſubſervient to us: which is unreaſonable, yea the root and foundation of Evil.

Now to love God Firſt, becauſe he is beſt, and wills that we ſhould love, and eſteem him as ſuch, it being juſt and good ſo to do. Secondly, Becauſe he is good to us, is the Author and Giver of all we are, and have of good; to love him for theſe Reaſons with all our Heart, all our Soul, and all our Strength; that is truely, or unfeignedly, according to our Knowledge of him, and intenſly or ſtrongly as we can: And to love our Neighbour, or Fellow Creature, as our Self, *viz.* as truly, and for the ſame Reaſons, *viz.* becauſe God loves him as well as us, and would have us love him becauſe it becomes us to imitate God as much as we can, and it is good for us ſo to do: This I ſay is the whole Law, naturally written in our Hearts, and legible by the Con-

ſideration of God, what he is in himſelf, and what he is to his Creatures, *viz.* The moſt perfect, or Self-ſufficient Being, and our moſt wiſe, good, and powerful Author, and of our relation to him, and our Fellow Creatures.

15. Now from this fountain of Love proceed all the orderly ſtreams of our Thoughts, and external Actions. If we love God as we ſhould, or deſire as he deſires, we ſhall hate to do otherwiſe, fear to do otherwiſe, our averſation, and avoiding that which is not right is determin'd by our loving that which is right; and when we once truely love God, we ſhall be willing to ſtudy his Will that we may not ignorantly act contrary thereto.

Having found God our Cauſe, Self-ſufficient, and All-perfect in himſelf, we cannot but acknowledge it fit and proper to be true, and acknowledge him ſuch as he is; there can be no reaſon that we ſhould deny what we know to be true; it is apparent that he is the Moſt High, the Greateſt Being, and we are things infinitely leſs, nay nothing of our ſelves; we are but the Effects of the Will of the moſt wiſe, good, powerful Cauſe; on which conſideration it is moſt evidently fit for us to ſubmit to his Guidance and Direction, as confiding in his Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power, that he knows, and wills, and can do that which is beſt for us, and to confeſs the Shortneſs of our Underſtandings, as we are but Creatures, and know infinitely leſs than he; and conſequently our Wills cannot be ſo good as his. Hence alſo it naturally follows, that if God has made us good, or as becomes the Beſt Being to make, and capable of Good or Pleaſure, we ſhould be thankful for our Being, and rejoyce or take pleaſure in conſidering God's Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power; ſo ſhould we be ready to comply with his Will as Inſtruments in manifeſting and communicating his Power,

Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs to our ſelves, and our Fellow Creatures, and hate, fear, and avoid being a Hinderance in any of theſe. Again; We are rationally obliged from the Conſideration of God, and his Will to us in relation to thoſe parts of the Creation he ſeems to have made for our ſakes and uſe, to uſe them ſo as we may ſee moſt of God's Perfections through them; and as we may receive moſt Good or Pleaſure by them, and how this is to be done, he has made us capable by a little reaſoning and attention to find out, as his Will, which we have all reaſon to ſubmit to, truſting his Wiſdom as the abſolute Rule wherein he directs us, he knowing beſt how theſe Ends may be attained, and his Goodneſs, that he is willing they ſhould. God has made all things to ſhew his own Perfections to thoſe Creatures he has made capable of ſeeing them, and to make them happy or pleas'd, whom he has made capable of Happineſs or Pleaſure, in the uſe of them. We are ready to believe theſe Creatures have nothing in themſelves that can affect us with pleaſure, but it is the Will of God we ſhould have pleaſure in the uſe of them, that thereby we might be brought to him, the fountain of all Satisfaction.

16. If this Account of the Will of God be not particular enough, yet a little farther.

Firſt, It is apparent, that having found our Author, or Cauſe, that only Self-ſufficient, and All-ſufficient Being, we call God, the Father of all things, we ſhould not only take him for ſuch, but that we ſhould have no other in the like eſteem, or let him have any Corrival in our Thoughts. That One ſingle Supream Being, muſt have no Fellow in our Hearts. The moſt exact or perfect Image of him, that which he hath made moſt like unto himſelf, muſt not be by us exalted into his Throne. He is not an Image, and whatever is a Repreſentation of

him, he himſelf hath made ſuch. We muſt not think therefore of any Second, as we think of him the Firſt, nor deſire Another equally with him. He muſt have the higheſt place, or be the only God both in our Judgments and Affections; who is Higheſt, Firſt and Beſt, or we ſhall be unjuſt, untrue, and ungrateful.

Secondly, Nor muſt we (if we are obliged to think aright of him, and duly eſteem him) preſume to make of our own fancy any thing as an Image, or Reſemblance of him; we muſt have no other Repreſentations of God than what he himſelf hath made. He muſt not by us be miſrepreſented, nor muſt we reverence, bow to, or honour any of our Fictions that we may fancy to reſemble him; no, nor whatever does indeed moſt reſemble him, with any ſuch honour as is due to him. We cannot rationally think any Image exactly like him, nor in our Acts of Worſhip have the ſame Thoughts of him as we have of any thing his Repreſentation, becauſe there can be no Image of him but what he hath made a Creature infinitely diſtant from him, and ſo far unlike him. Nor muſt we be ſo fooliſh as to think that we can offer our Homage more acceptably, or to better purpoſe through any of our deviſed Mediums, than if we come to the Fountain himſelf of all Goodneſs and Beneficence.

Thirdly, Neither (if we are obliged to proſecute the Ends and Deſigns of God in the Manifeſtations of himſelf) muſt we mention any of his Attributes, or Properties, whereby he is known to no purpoſe, or idlely: For God is no vain or trivial Being, nor is there any thing ſmall, or of little weight, belonging to him, who is the Supream, or Self-ſufficient Being, or a Matter lightly or boldly to be play'd with by his Creatures, who are, even the higheſt of them, unneceſſary Beings, or nothing in themſelves,

and

and compar'd with God infinitely beneath him: Much leſs may we dare to take his name into our Mouths, who is Goodneſs and Truth, in wiſhing Evil, or aſſerting Falſhood.

Fourthly, And as God always ought to be had in moſt honourable eſteem in our Thoughts, and be by us acknowledged to be what he is; ſo conſequently we ought to ſet apart ſome time for the Profeſſion of our Acknowledgment of our Maker to others; that thereby they may be taught, ſtir'd up to, and ſtrengthen'd in the ſame Acknowledgment, and due Homage to their Author: And that at the ſame time we all may enjoy the neceſſary Benefits of a Ceſſation from the Fatigues of Bodily Works, which commonly take up ſix times as much time in proportion as our mental and more noble Exerciſes. Beſides that our whole time is rather numbered by Sevens, than by Eights, or any other numbers, may be ſeen by the Natural Scale of numbers in Harmony, (wherein God hath created all things) which perpetually runneth to a Seventh, and no farther; the Eighth being a new Firſt, or the Firſt but doubled, and which of the ſeven is the Seventh, is determined from whence we begin.

Fifthly, As God is to have the Supream Honours, and Worſhip, as our Cauſe, infinitely above us; ſo even thoſe Creatures God hath made the Inſtruments of our Being, or before us in Excellency and and Dignity, ſhould be acknowledged as ſuch, and ſo more worthy than our ſelves; and being honour'd by us, this Honour ſhould be ſhewn, and teſtified by proper Submiſſion to them, with other Teſtimonies, whereby we may ſhew our due eſteem. Thoſe that we are immediately beholding to, tho' but as Inſtruments for our being, or well being, thoſe we have been neceſſitated to depend upon, tho' but as means for the continuance of our Being in this life,

have in all reaſon due to them from us, a debt of Honour, Eſteem and Regard; and thoſe that in any reſpect are better, and more excellent than us, can with no Juſtice be denied the Acknowledgment, as we find occaſion, of what they really are. Nor is the giving all our Betters (eſpecially thoſe we have had our Dependance on as Parents) their due Regard, without a natural Tendency to our long, and happy Continuance in this Life, as they are thereby farther encouraged, and provoked to contribute the more to our Felicity; and we may alſo hope for, as our Deſert, the like Honour from our Off-ſpring, or bear the contrary with the leſs Regret.

Sixtbly, And as God has made us all the means of manifeſting his Excellencies to one another, the Repreſentations or Images of himſelf, it is the higheſt Preſumption and Boldneſs that we ſhould attempt to put an end to, or ſpoil, or put out of ſight ſo excellent an Image of God, as he hath made Man. And this is firſt moſt unreaſonable and culpable if practis'd on Self, it being every Man's Duty and Intereſt to be, as God would have him, and a high Affront and Rebellion to refuſe the Gift of Life and Duties thereof; and as it were a bold revenging the Croſſes of our fooliſh Wills on the Author of our Life, ſpoiling as much as we can his Work.

And tho' we may be perſwaded that poſſibly there may not be ſo much Excellency in ſome others as in our ſelves, yet we ſhould have ſo great a Love and Reſpect to the meaneſt Man, as he is the Image of God, an Epitome of the Creation, a Lord of the Corporal, and a Bond of Corporal and Spiritual Nature; wherein God may be ſeen, as in a Map of all his Works, that we ſhould not deſire, or preſume to blot out ſo great a draught of the Divine Painter, or deface ſo great a Repreſentative of his Majeſty. And as Man is a Lord over the inferiour Creatures,

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under God, to put him as much as poſſible out of his Office, his Stewardſhip, or Viceroyalty, is an Affront to his Sovereign; for which he that does ſo, ought himſelf to be put ſo far out of the ſame capacity, (tho' he ought not to put himſelf out:) which he himſelf vertually acknowledgeth, ſince doing as one would be done by, is a moſt apparently equitable Rule: For if a Man loves Life as a Good, (as every Man in his right mind does) and would not that another ſhould take that from him on which, as well or ill uſed, depends ſo much of Happineſs or Miſery; conſequently he ought not to take it from another, whom God has made a living Man as well as he, capable of as much Good as another, and in this at leaſt better than he that would break this Rule, that he does not purpoſe like him, to be a declared Enemy to his Kind, and thereby adjudge his own Life ought rightly, and alſo neceſſarily to be taken away to prevent a greater Miſchief, *viz.* the loſs of another Life more valuable than the Life of this declared Deſpiſer, and Enemy of God and Man; which Reaſons do not only convince us that we ſhould do nothing tending to hurt the Life of another, but that we ſhould do what in us lies to preſerve it as well as our own.

Seventhly, As it is moſt reaſonable we ſhould Eſteem and Honour particularly, and in eſpecial manner thoſe that have been the means of our Being, and not ſlight and deſpiſe them; that we ſhould do as we would be done by, and do nothing tending to deſtroy any of our Fellow-rational Creatures, but labour to preſerve them. So alſo that we may avoid the ſaid Miſchiefs, and perform the oppoſite Duties, it is reaſonable and neceſſary that in the buſineſs of the Propagation of Mankind, Man ſhould obſerve the Laws of Order and Conveniency; that is, that one Man and one Woman ſhould

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be joyn'd together in free Love and Conſtancy, and become one in that matter, never leaving one the other to joyn with a third. That one Man ſhould not uſe more Women than ſuch a one as a Wife while ſhe lives, nor one Woman more Men than her Husband before he is dead, is moſt reaſonable from many Conſiderations, tho' Men are ſo inclinable to Diſorders in this Matter, and ſo willing to be blind, and not ſee them. As if the promiſcuous uſe of Men, or Women be practiſed; it will be the unavoidable Confuſion of Relations, and Cauſe of the many evil Conſequences thereof: Relative Duties cannot be perform'd where Relations are not known: As for inſtance; A Child will be ſometimes ignorant of his Parents, and ſo will not only omit the Honour, Gratitude, and Reverence due to them, but may ſometimes be liable to ſlight, deſpiſe, contemn, or even abuſe them, or do thoſe things to them which tho' lawful to others, not at all to be done to Parents; which if ever they come to be known, might cauſe great diſquiet of Mind. Again, By the promiſcuous uſe of Men or Women, the Right of Inheritances will often be perverted and confounded; one Man's Child will enjoy another Man's Land, or Goods, the true Heir being unknown; a Man ſhall labour for another's Children, and not for his own. Again, As all Children of Men are more helpleſs than any other Animals; if both Parents are not concern'd for them, they will many ways be expos'd to Miſery, in the want of that Care and Love, and all the Effects thereof which orderly Parents have for their Children: And the Women who are not able to go through their Bringings forth, and Breeding up of their Children, alone as other Animals, would be often expoſed, with their Children to great Miſeries, without the conſtant Help and Care of ſuch a Relation, as a

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Husband and Father ought to be. Again, if one Man ſhould have divers Women, tho' he were as a Husband to them all, divers Inconveniencies would follow; The Man would love one better than another, and ſo not be equally juſt to them all; for which cauſe they would not agree, or live in Love and Content together; they would have Jealouſies and Strifes againſt one another, and have many Temptations to Inconſtancy; when one Man is not enough ordinarily to ſatisfie the natural Deſire of more Women, ſome muſt be defrauded; ſo on the other hand, if one Woman ſhould have more Huſbands, and if one Woman does not happen to be enough in the Conceit of her Husband, or the Man for his Wife, the ſeldom Enjoyment will render the Satisfaction the greater, and better anſwer all the Ends of Marriage. Beſides, if one Man ſhould have many Wives, ſome others who have as much reaſon to be allow'd ſuch a Help and Satisfaction, muſt have none, whereby Propagation would alſo be much hindered. Again, Whoever loves a Woman peculiarly, would alſo have her love him peculiarly, ſo on the other ſide. Which Rule of doing as one would be done by, cannot be kept without loving ſingly. No Whoremonger can poſſibly do as he would be done by; he would not have his Wife or Daughters proſtituted, or common: Nor would any Man of reaſon be willingly expos'd to the many Miſeries not only of Diſeaſes, but of other natural Conſequences following that high Injuſtice of breaking that moſt ſolemn Contract, Bargain, or Oath, Men make at their Marriage; which need never be made but freely, and to one they themſelves have choſe out of the reſt of Men or Women. Nor is the Benefit, Convenience, or Pleaſure of ſingle Love, and Marriage-Conſtancy ſmall, if the choice be well made; that is, of ſuch as are naturally ſuitable

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to, or for one another: Neither is this State to be equall'd, much leſs exceeded, by the extravagant, and roving Affections of thoſe that take moſt liberty in their Actions relating to Propagation. But I need ſay no more, theſe Diſorders being ſeen by all Men to have ſo great a ſtroke in the Miſeries of Mankind, and appear ſo baſe to all who behold them in others. Only one thing remains, which I ſhall here touch upon; and that is the reaſon of the Diſorder, or Inconvenience of Marrying our Kindred, and that is founded upon the Honour due to a Father and Mother; that they in themſelves, or in their parts, ſhould not be profaned, made common, or inferiour by their Children, which nothing but Neceſſity could ever excuſe, and which alſo would unavoidably be by the promiſcuous uſe of Men and Women.

Eighthly, No leſs evident is the Reaſon founded in the Order of things, and diſcoverable by the natural Light that we ſhould not either privately, or by force, take away, or pervert the Property of, any Good that is our Neighbour's; every Man acknowledgeth this unjuſt, in that he himſelf would not part with that which is his Propriety, otherwiſe than by his Conſent.

Ninthly, Not ſo much as the Good Name of another ought to be taken away, or hurt, if we will do as we would be done by, nor our Fellow Creature repreſented worſe, or otherwiſe than he is, to his damage; we muſt not accuſe him falſly at all, much leſs in the name of the God of Truth; whom to invoke in teſtifying a Lye, is the higheſt Affront, and daring'ſt Folly. Nor can we pretend that we our ſelves, or our Neighbour, can have any advantage by a Falſhood; which by obſervation we ſhall find ſooner or later tending even to the external damage of one or both; but if for a time there ſeem

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to be ſome profit in what hath been inconſiderately call'd an Officious Lye, it is but external, and at the ſame time brings an Evil to the Mind greater than that outward ſeeming advantage can countervail.

Tenthly, And that we may be exactly conformable to all theſe Laws of Order and Equity, we are to obſerve them in our very Deſires. It is moſt reaſonable our Deſires ſhould be conformable to the Will of God as manifeſted, in the order of his Works tending to our Good. If we ought not to be unjuſt, untrue, or evil to another, either God or Man, we muſt not ſo much as deſire ſo to be; for Will to do Evil is the Action of doing Evil, and wants only (and that but in ſome caſes) to be ſignified externally, or to affect another, to make it as much Evil as it can be. But Love is the fulfilling of the whole Law, that which prevents, or as much as poſſible amends theſe Diſorders; he that loves God will ſtudy to comply with his Will, to be juſt and true to him; he that loves his Neighbour as he ought, will do him no harm in Body or Mind, but labour to do him good in both: The abſence of all the Good, and the preſence of all the Evil, relateing to our ſelves and our Neighbour, comes from the want of true and regulated Love.

17. Now as the Free-will of God is the ſole Cauſe of the Being, and Suchneſs of Being of the Creatures; ſo whatever God hath made cannot be thought to be otherwiſe than Good, from Goodneſs it ſelf can nothing but Good proceed: And tho' it may be ſaid in reſpect of the Power of God, he might have made things otherwiſe; yet in conſideration of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, it cannot poſſibly be ſaid, he might have made any thing better, without the greateſt Preſumption and Folly: So that whatever God makes any thing, ſuch is its Beſtneſs.

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Let us but once know what a thing was as it came from the hands of God, and what it is the Will of its Maker it ſhall be, ſuch is its Goodneſs, and the bounds of its Creature Perfection; what it ſhall be, I ſay, becauſe it doth not appear that God made things unchangeable, but rather in a condition tending to alteration; ſo that tho' it be good, yea perhaps beſt for the Creature to be ſo, and ſo at one time; yet it is good, or beſt at another time, to be in ſome reſpects otherwiſe. The Intelligent Creature, at leaſt Man, as he comes from the hands of God, appears capable of an increaſe of Knowledge and of Satisfaction; and tho' at firſt it is very good, yet it is capable of better being, in that reſpect, and the Good Will of God in making things, is not to be conſider'd merely in their firſt Make, but as a continual Act reaching to the Creatures whole Duration.

Now the way of the Creatures well Being, better Being, yea beſt poſſible Being, *viz.* its moſt clear beholding the Perfections of God, intenſeſt Loving, and compleateſt Satisfaction in him, dependeth on the moſt Wiſe good Will, and Pleaſure of God, which muſt be known as a Rule and Guide unto that end, *viz.* that the Creature will as God wills, to its utmoſt Capacity, and be pleas'd with whatever God does, who can do nothing but Good. This Conformity to the Will of God, is the only poſſible way for the Creature to be as much as it can be pleas'd, or happy; and ſo long, and ſo much as it wills no otherwiſe than God would have it will; ſo long, and ſo much will it be joyous and ſatisfied, as God made it to be in him.

18. But if ever the Creature wills otherwiſe than God wills, it muſt of neceſſity find the Diſorder and Inconvenience of that Will, and be uneaſie, and diſpleas'd; it will certainly be ſome time or other diſ-

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contented and uneaſie, either that it can't have Satisfaction in, and by its own fooliſh Will, not being able to get it, (it not becoming God to comply with its diſorderly Deſire) or that it was ſo fooliſh or wicked to ſeek Satisfaction that way. The Creature can no more be ſatisfied in its own Will as independent, than have an independent Being. It is the Property of God alone, and only poſſible to him who is ſelf-ſufficient and all-perfect, to be pleas'd in himſelf: But as for the Creature, ſo far and ſo long as it continues in its private and ſelf-will, ſo far and ſo long it muſt be unhappy; that which it wills cannot always or long be done, unleſs God wills the ſame; and to will what one can't have, is the ground of all poſſible Unhappineſs. And tho' a Creature may be ſuppos'd uneaſie ſometimes in willing Good, it may be becauſe another for whom it is concern'd, wills Evil againſt its Will; and this ſprings from its Creature Nature that it is not ſufficient in it ſelf as God is, who therefore cannot be affected with Uneaſineſs becauſe of any thing another does. And this Uneaſineſs of the Creature, on the account of another's Evil, may be grounded even in love to God, and be becauſe God's Will is diſobey'd by others, it being a Property of its imperfect Creature Nature to have Paſſion when what it wills is not done: Which may be permitted alſo to ſtir the Creature up (who would otherwiſe be more negligent) to ſeek, and endeavour its Fellow Creatures Good, Creatures being mightily carried on to things by Paſſions, Pleaſure, and Uneaſineſs; juſt as there is a troubleſome Senſe of things hurting the Body, that we might be thereby preſently drove to avoid them: But this good Sorrow or Diſcontent, becauſe Evil is done where-ever it happens, will end in, and be out-ballanced by Joy, either in having done the Duty of Love,

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viz. of endeavouring that God's Will may be done in and by others, as well as in and by one's ſelf, or alſo that the Perſon hath by his endeavours brought another to Good, to Happineſs in willing as God wills, as he would have him. Nay this Sorrow is ſeldom void of its preſent mixture of Joy and Satisfaction in doing one's own Pleaſure, as conformable to the Will and Good Pleaſure of God.

On the other hand, though a Creature may poſſibly ſome time rejoyce in willing otherwiſe than God wills, as having for a time its diſorderly Will, it cannot be ſo always, but will ſome time or other find it has croſs'd it ſelf by the loſs of a greater Satisfaction. And every ſuch Joy will but add, multiply, and lay up a greater Ground or Stock for Diſcontent and Anguiſh; in as much as if the bare willing otherwiſe than God wills, is ſo very unreaſonable, the rejoycing in ſuch Unreaſonableneſs, is ſtill a greater Diſorder, and will yield uneaſier Reflections when-ever it comes to be juſtly thought upon.

But that God made Intelligent Creatures capable of continual Pleaſure or Satisfaction, is evident, becauſe it cannot be thought that God could make, or create a Deſire (how large ſo ever) greater than he can ſatisfie, who is infinitely greater than it, and yet ſatisfied with himſelf, or that he would make a Creature with ſuch a Deſire, and deſign it ſhould not be ſatisfied, becauſe ſuch a deſire would be to no purpoſe. But that the Creatures Deſire ſhould be ſatisfied with it ſelf, is impoſſible, becauſe the Creature is not Self-ſufficient, or God. But the Creature may poſſibly err, and ſuppoſe its Happineſs to lie in doing its own Will, as its own, and otherwiſe than God wills.

19. To will otherwiſe than God wills, is the only true and bottom Notion of Sin. And to will is always

ways an Act, and there is no Act where there is no Will; and it is as much an Act to will one thing, as it is to will another: If I will an Absurdity, or a Contradiction, a Disorder, a Defect, such as is to please my self in all my fooliſh Imaginations; it is as much willing, or an Act of the Will, as if I will a Truth, a Good, or what is convenient, orderly, and ſuitable to my nature. And there can be nothing culpable in the Creature, but an Act of the Will muſt bear the blame; all other Thoughts of Created Minds beſides Volitions, and all Motions of Bodies, are rather Paſſions, and wholly blameleſs; but where an Act of the Will, diſagreeing with the Will of God, hath determin'd them amiſs, in which Act of the Will, the Fault lies. So that Sin can be nothing but an Act, or Volition that is contrary to the Will of God, and conſequently there can be no Sin but actual Sin. Sin in other words is ſaid to be a Tranſgreſſion of the Law of God; that is, a doing ſomething contrary to the Law, or Will of God; and Doing is an Act, and nothing acts but what wills. Sins that are properly call'd Sins of Omiſſion, are not without Acts of the Will; even Acts of Will to omit what ought to be done, the not willing a Good, is never without willing ſomething elſe, even Evil. It is from Ignorance, and want of conſidering, that ſome Men talk of Original Sin as diſtinct from, or other than Actual Sin, and it is an idle Notion as they underſtand it; for wherever there is a Thinking Being or Mind, there is a Will willing ſomething or other; and if that Will be contrary to the Will, or Law of God, it is Actual Sin: Where there is no ſuch Act of the Will, there is no Sin. The not knowing the Will of God is an Alleviation of the Sin, but though the Creature ignorantly wills otherwiſe than God wills, that Ignorance if at all the Creatures fault does not make it

ceaſe to be the Creatures diſorder, or what ought not to be. Nor is God ever the Cauſe of the Creatures inevitable Ignorance of what he would have them do: He cannot be ſuppos'd to cauſe any thing he wills not, that would be a great Imperfection; therefore he cannot be ſaid to cauſe the Creature not to know what he would have him do; that would be all one as to will what he wills not, which is a Contradiction. But he has made the intelligent Creatures capable of knowing and doing his Will; thoſe Beings that have no Thoughts, are incapable either of Sin or Obedience. Original Sin, if we muſt uſe ſuch a term, is nothing but the firſt Act of Will contrary to the Will of God: the firſt diſorderly Act of the firſt Creature that ſo acted, is the Original or Beginning of all Sin; the firſt undue Act of the firſt Man is the Original, or firſt Sin of Men; the firſt Act of Will, contrary to the Will of God of every particular Creature, is its Original or firſt Sin; and the Creature is never guilty of Sin, or acting contrary to God's Will, till it has ſo acted. Moſt abſurd therefore is it to ſuppoſe me guilty of that Sin which was the Act of the Will of another; committed before I had ſo much as any act of Will, or Being it ſelf.

20. So far we have conſidered Creatures as coming from the hands of God, and Good; or poſſible to be changed, and become evil in their Actions. We now come to conſider them as actually evil: And it is, or may be apparent to any Man that will deſcend into himſelf, and conſider that Man has not always and exactly done as he ſhould; but has ſometime will'd, or does will otherwiſe than God wills. Of this, I ſay, we may be ſoon convinced by our own Experience or Conſcience, the ſureſt of all Convictions. 30. If it be true that as God is all perfect, or ſufficient in himſelf; ſo that he hath created things

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to manifeſt his Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power, &c. to the Intelligent Creatures, that they may be as happy as they are capable of Being, it is moſt certain; Firſt, that if I have not conſidered my ſelf, being once capable of Reaſoning, and ſo found my Cauſe, and enquired and found what he is, admir'd, and lov'd him, and had thankful Thoughts of him, it is not becauſe I was incapable of doing ſo, but becauſe I would not, and I have not will'd as becomes me; as God wills I ſhould, but have ſinned. Secondly, If I have will'd any thing that does not tend to make me as happy as I can be, or as much pleas'd with God in himſelf, and in his Works, as I ſhould, I have will'd otherwiſe than God wills, and ſo have ſinned. But I find even after I have found God, and ſomewhat conſider'd him, I have very much forborn or neglected to conſider him, and conſidered other things unworthy ſuch conſideration more than him; nor have I loved him as the Self-ſufficient Being, and my Cauſe, ought to be loved; but have loved my ſelf, or other things unworthy ſuch Love, more than him; while I am convinced he is better than me, or any thing, and the Cauſe things are, and are any way conduſive to my Good or Pleaſure; and in ſo doing, as well as in other Inſtances, I find I have ſometimes will'd thoſe things which at other times I have found not tending to make me as much as may be happy. I have will'd things before I have conſider'd, or inform'd my ſelf of the Nature and Tendency of them, ſlighting thoſe Directions God has made me capable of receiving from him; and ſo acted, or will'd diſorderly, or otherwiſe than becomes me. I have not always been pleas'd, or glad, in contemplating God in himſelf, and in his Works, and therefore I find I have not always will'd as God wills. I know (or may ſoon do) that God's Will is beſt in relation to

himſelf, and his Creatures: I have been convinced ſuch and ſuch a thing is according to God's Will; yet I have done otherwiſe, and choſe that which my Judgment informs me is not God's Will, thereby aſſerting my own Will therein better than God's, or my Judgment truer than his. Again, I am convinced (when I ſeriouſly conſider) that God's Will is that wherein I can beſt be pleas'd; but I find I have been diſpleas'd, and uneaſie in mind many a time, either becauſe I have found I choſe ſomething not beſt for me, or becauſe for want of Conſideration I have thought ſomething good for me, and will'd it, which I could not poſſibly have: Thus I find infallibly I have will'd otherwiſe than God wills, and ſo have ſinned.

Here we have from the Light of Nature, or our own Reaſon, an evident Conviction of Sin, or of Man's Fall and Degeneracy; every one may ſee it in himſelf, and the ſame we may obſerve tho' not ſome ways ſo apparently in others. And all Mankind in general, how dark ſoever their Light, and how little ſoever their Reaſon is, having once attain'd to the uſe of Reaſon, have been ſometimes ready to confeſs themſelves indeed guilty of doing amiſs, and forced to accuſe others as guilty of Evil. What Man is there but that, if I do any thing to make him leſs happy, is ſenſible I do not as I would be done by, and ſo do not my Duty, but am a Sinner? Now God cannot be ſuppos'd to make Man thus evil, and out of order, becauſe he can do nothing but what is good; tho' he made Man capable of ſinning, or going out of order: And as Man muſt needs be ſuppos'd to come out of God's hands good, and orderly; but is become evil, acting amiſs, Man muſt be ſuppos'd to be fallen, and degenerated from his Primitive ſtate.

21. The Greatneſs of Man's Sin in willing otherwiſe than God wills, the Grievouſneſs of his Fault in falling from what God made him, is apparent, or may be ſo if we but conſider; That Man is nothing of himſelf, but is beholden to God for his Being, and All. It is therefore moſt highly unreaſonable that Man ſhould deny to acknowledge ſuch a one his Author, or dare to contradict or disbelieve his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, in acting as if God did not know, or would not do what is beſt for his Creature. How unreaſonable is it that Man ſhould fooliſhly, and with an ungrateful Stubbornneſs, refuſe the Good, yea any Good God offers him? Had God made him leſs capable of Good, he had been bound to be thankful for any capacity; had God denied him ſome Good, he had made him capable of, he had been endebted to Love, and thank his Maker for any Good he had given him. It is a high Slight of the boundleſs ever-overflowing Fountain of Goodneſs, for Man to refuſe any, or the greateſt Happineſs God offers him; and whoever does not ſtudy God's Will as a Director to Happineſs, will certainly miſs ſome Good. It might be Love to refuſe what the Giver would looſe or want, by giving it, or could not well ſpare; but a Slight not to take where the Giver has abundance, and will have never the leſs by giving. For Man to refuſe any Happineſs God offers him, is ſo far to deſire not to be beholden to God. But he that is moſt beholden to God, is moſt happy; and he that is moſt happy, muſt conſequently be moſt beholden to him. This will remain an everlaſting Truth while God and Creatures have a Being. Is it not the height of Folly, yea Madneſs, as well as Injuſtice, to chooſe Miſery rather than acknowledge one's Maker as the Author of Happineſs? To deſire not to be beholden to God, our Cauſe, our Lord and Soveraign, is the

higheſt Affront to the higheſt Majeſty, and no leſs than an abſurd Endeavour to dethrone him, and be of our ſelves, that is be God: To ſubſtract our ſelves from our Dependence on his Will, and to proſecute our own, in Diſtinction from, and Contradiction to his, is ſo unreaſonable, bold, and mad a Preſumption as to endeavour to overcome, and deſtroy him; ſo great a Folly and Abſurdity as to endeavour the Impoſſibility of adnihilating the Being of all Beings, and conſequently our Selves and All. So great a Treaſon, Boldneſs, Perverſeneſs, Madneſs and Injuſtice, is contain'd in Sin, or willing otherwiſe than God wills. And all Acts of Sin are eſſentially the ſame; and every reiterated Act of Sin, is virtually the Approbation and Ratification of all Sins paſt, and to come.

22. Now for as much as the Creature is found guilty, and convicted of this mighty Diſorder, has done Evil, and it cannot poſſibly be undone, but that it will eternally remain true that the Creature has ſinn'd; it follows to be conſider'd what is now to be done, or how the Creature ought to behave himſelf, as guilty and conſcious of Sin.

And there are theſe things which by natural and right conſequence, ſhould ariſe in Man from this Conſideration: Firſt, an humble Acknowledgment and Confeſſion to God of what he hath fooliſhly done, not to fancy he can hide his Sin from God, or to go about to extenuate it, and excuſe it. Secondly, A Sorrow, Regret, and Diſpleaſure with himſelf for ſo fooliſh and unreaſonable Doings; which Sorrow, tho' it ſuppoſes, and is naturally conſequent of Evil, yet it becomes a Medium in order to future Joy, becauſe the troubleſome Thoughts, or Senſe of what we have done amiſs, urges and inſtigates to that; which is the Third, and chief thing Man ſhould do, having ſinn'd, *viz.* Repent, or

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ſtudy what is God's Will, and reſolve to do it, or will as he wills for the future. Which things on the ſame reaſon ought to be reiterated as oft as Man ſhall fall again, or reiterate Acts of Sin. With theſe there ſhould be a hearty Deſire to God that he will forgive, or manifeſt to us anew ſome Acts of his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power, whereby we may be effectually influenced to ſee as it is the Diſorder, or Evil of our ſinful Will, to change our Mind fully to conform for the future to God's Will, that God may be to us for time to come, as he would have been if we had never ſinned. This, I ſay, is the natural Duty of a Sinner, To repent, or be ſenſible of his doing amiſs, and to change his Mind to do well; and ſuch a Sinner may boldly, if humbly ask, and expect Forgiveneſs of God. Now if we conſider the Forgiveneſs of God well, I think nothing can be truely and properly Forgiveneſs but (as I have ſaid) the New Manifeſtation of ſome Acts of God towards the Creature upon its Sinning and Senſe of it, whereby it is effectually perſwaded to change its Will, and go on to change it till it comes to will again as God wills: In which God relieves the Creature (more or leſs, according to the degree of its new Obedience it finds in it ſelf) from the uneaſie Thoughts of its paſt Sins, and affects it with the ſame Pleaſure and Satisfaction (proportionable to the progreſs of its Repentance) the Creature would have had in God if it had never ſinn'd, God abating ſo much of his due as cannot poſſibly be paid, *viz.* the keeping of his Law, which has not been done for the time paſt. This is the ἄφεσις ἁμαρτῶν, Forgiveneſs of Sin, to be pray'd for, and believed, and expected in God. But what-ever Acts of God we may ſuppoſe towards the Creature, if it is not brought to will again as God wills, ſometime or other to do its Duty, it is not really forgiven, its

Sins pardoned, or done away, divorſed, or looſed from it, as the word ἄφεσις ſignifies.

23. Now for as much as the Creature conſidering the Unreaſonableneſs of its Sin, its Will not being quite changed, or but little changed, and its Underſtanding not fully inform'd, may be apt to doubt [as too inclinable to meaſure God by its ſelf] whether God will indeed thus add to act towards the Happineſs of a once Rebellious Creature: We ſhall conſider by what rational Arguments we may be perſwaded that God will indeed, yea is ready to forgive. Firſt, it is God's unchangeable Will and Command that the Creature be obedient to the Will of his Maker, as what is moſt juſt and reaſonable; for God cannot be ſuppos'd to change his own Will, or will what is not juſt and reaſonable: To ſuppoſe he can is all one as to ſuppoſe him imperfect, or not God, or not wiſe and good. If ſo he muſt needs be ſuppos'd willing Repentance, or a Leaving, or Remiſſion of Sins in the Creature that has ſinn'd, and God cannot croſs or contradict himſelf. Beſides, it is better that the Sinner repent, and become obedient, than that he go on in Sin and Diſobedience; and God cannot be ſuppos'd to will that which is not beſt. Again, if it be a Good to will as God wills, and the Creature having found the Unreaſonableneſs of the contrary ſome what deſires ſo to do, is ſomewhat inclinable ſo to do, it cannot be ſuppos'd that the Creature ſhould deſire more Good than God does, or will any real, and to it poſſible and ſuitable Good which God does not will. God will therefore hear the Creatures deſire, forgive, or promote the Creatures good deſire, and give it freſh Arguments effectually to perſwade it more and more to will as he wills; and when it is brought perfectly, or exactly ſo to do, it is perfectly, or fully acquitted, and fully juſtified, or made juſt, and not till then, becauſe

becauſe it is not ſo till it is ſo; nor can God reckon, think or account, or declare it ſo till it is ſo, becauſe he can neither be deceived nor deceive. But as Repentance is a work of time, even of our whole Life; ſo Forgiveneſs, or Juſtification, is a work of time, not perfected till Sin is done away.

That God has given intelligent Creatures a Capacity of willing as he wills they ſhould, is evident: If he had not, they could not be obliged ſo to do; and that they might poſſibly, and have will'd otherwiſe, is as apparent as Experience can make a thing: It is moreover manifeſt, that he has given them a Capacity of knowing when they have will'd otherwiſe than their Maker wills: An Underſtanding capable of ſeeing the Unreaſonableneſs, with a Will ſometime ſenſible of the Unhappineſs of ſo doing. We have already found, that he wills his own Will to be done, and that his Will is beſt, and unchangeably ſo, is evident; that he adds upon the Creatures Sin freſh Arguments to perſwade the ſinning Creature to change, and go on to change its Evil will, till it is changed wholly; that it becomes God ſo to do, while nothing can be ſuppos'd better, or poſſibly ſo good, either to the Manifeſtation of God's Excellencies, or the Creatures Happineſs, makes us poſitively conclude that God will never be wanting on his part to the Sinner.

But here perhaps ſome will ſtart a not-altogether impertinent Queſtion.

24. Why God made the Creature capable of ſinning, or willing contrary to his Maker's Will? I anſwer;

That it was moſt becoming the Perfections of God, and their Manifeſtation in, and to the Creatures, and the Creatures Happineſs thereby, to make them capable, or able either to obey, and will as God wills; or to diſobey, or ſin, by willing the contrary

trary. For the Illuſtration of this, conſider; Firſt, God's Dominion, Soveraignty, or Lordſhip, could not otherwiſe have been acknowledged: For if the Creature had not been capable of Sinning, it had not been capable of Obeying; Obedience to God being nothing but willing what God wills, becauſe he wills we ſhould, when we can poſſibly, will otherwiſe; and Diſobedience to God can be nothing elſe than willing what God does not will, when we may will what he does. There is no Obedience properly ſo call'd, or of Mind, but what is free, nor no Diſobedience of Mind but what is ſpontaneous. To Be or Do what we can't but Be or Do, is no proper Obedience; and not to Be or Do what we can't Be or Do, cannot well be call'd Diſobedience. And God did not make Man capable of Obeying or Sinning, that he might Sin; but capable of Sinning or Obeying, that he might Obey, and ſo acknowledge, and ſhew God's Dominion and Lordſhip over him. Again, if Man had not been a Voluntary, or Free Being, he had been incapable of Pleaſure or Happineſs, (which conſiſts in the Satisfaction of Will, or having ones Deſire) and ſo had had no ſuch occaſion of acknowledging God's Goodneſs. Nor farther would he have had the Excellency of Being ſo much the Image, or Repreſentation of God, who is a Free Agent, or has a Will tho' not indifferent to Good and Evil: God's Will being the Rule of Good, he cannot but will what he wills, nor can he ſuppoſe any thing otherwiſe than it is, his Wiſdom being abſolutely perfect. But Man is the Image of God as he is a Free Agent, or has a Will capable of willing Good. God's Will is his own Rule, he being Self-ſufficient, can have none to obey that is wiſer, or that can will better. Man's Good depends on God, as the Shadow on the Subſtance, as the Picture on the Thing painted out.

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When Man's own will interpoſes between God and him, he ſo far ceaſeth truly to repreſent God, and be happy. God's Will, which is beſt, is Man's Rule, or Exemplar; and the Creature can be no more like God than an Image can be to a thing it repreſents. An Image can never be the ſame thing it ſelf of which it is the Image, (to ſay it may, is all one as to ſay it is the Image, and not the Image, which is a Contradiction) nor can any Image be equal, or in all reſpects ſuch as the thing it is the Image of, or like it more than in ſome reſpects: For if we could ſuppoſe two things every way alike, neither of them could be ſaid to be the Image of the other; becauſe the other would with as much reaſon be ſaid to be the Image of that: Nay it would be abſurd to talk of a Diſtinction where we have ſuppos'd no difference: And the Image of a Creature may be more like, or nearer an Equality with the Creature it repreſents, than an Image of God can be like God; for nothing can be the Image of God but a Creature; for there is nothing but God, and Creature, and between God and Creature, there cannot be leſs than infinite Diſtance and Inequality; which is not between Creature and Creature, tho' one be the moſt perfect, the other the moſt imperfect of Creatures, being both finite. Nothing, I ſay, can be ſaid to be the Image of God but a Creature, unleſs there could be conceived any Third Being between God and the Creature. I ſay farther; God cannot be ſaid to be the Image of God, or, which is the ſame, that which is the Image of God cannot be ſaid in a proper ſenſe to be God; for ſo the Image would either be ſaid to be the Image, and yet the ſame thing it is the Image of, which is all one as to ſay it is the Image, and not the Image, or what it is, and ſomething elſe than what it is, which is a Contradiction. But if the Image of God, being

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ſomething Elſe, or Another, than what it is the Image of, be yet ſaid to be God, it is conſequentially ſaid to be Another God, and ſuch a One who is but an Image of Another; which alſo affirms it in the Conſequence at the ſame time not to be God, tho' inconſiderately ſaid to be ſo: For what is in any ſenſe but a Reſemblance, or Imaginary, is not God. Things may be ſaid in ſome reſpects to be like God, but God cannot be ſaid to be like any thing, he being Firſt, Original. Beſides, nothing in God can be the Image of God, becauſe that one thing would not be the Image of God, *viz.* of the compleat Divine Being, it being ſuppos'd to be the Image but of Something Elſe in God, not of All in God, it Self (if it were not abſurd to call it, Self, there being not more than One Self in God) being ſomething ſuppos'd in God. But to conclude this Digreſſion; God being altogether Subſtance, and Original, there can be nothing Imaginary, or but a Copy in him; whatever therefore is an Image, or Copy of God, is but a Creature; and whoever affirms the contrary, affirms he knows not what, a Chimera, or his own vain Imagination, if not worſe. But to return again from this occaſional Digreſſion.

If Man could not have will'd Evil, he could have had no Temptation to it, either from within or without; and his Diſobedience could not have been ſo ſignal and great, could it be ſuppos'd any at all: Vertue that is never tried, is not ſo eminent. God did not make the Creature capable of ſuppoſing ſomething preferable to its Subjection to the Will of its Maker, that it might ſeek ſuch a thing, or venture to try whether it were ſo or no, but that it might have occaſion to reſiſt and overcome ſuch a Suggeſtion, and own its Dependence; without which it had been uncapable of, or wanted that Happineſs

pineſs or Pleaſure which is found in a ſort of Self-denial in doing what is pleaſing to a more excellent Perſon which one loves, which is not little, as every one may experience, the love of Men perhaps being always placed on the account of ſomething ſeen of excellency in another which is not in one's ſelf; and the degree of ſuch Pleaſure conſiſts in the degree of Love, and the degree of Love in the degree of Excellency in the Object; and God is the beſt of all things that can be loved.

25. But here may be objected what by many is aſſerted; That Man is not free to will either Good or Evil. And here ſome affirm, That Man ſince he hath ſinned, and remains impenitent, is free only to will Evil. Others from more conſideration, (tho' it may ſeem a Paradox to the former, and ought to be well explain'd) are perſwaded that Man is not free to will Evil, but only to will Good. Let us for the farther clearing this whole matter, conſider it fundamentally.

Good, or Pleaſure, I take to be the ſame thing, and the Pleaſure of the Self-ſufficient Being is the ſupream Good; he being of himſelf, and beholden to none for any Pleaſure, but all beholden to him for whatever can truely pleaſe, it is but juſt and right that all Pleaſure ſhould be according to his Will and Pleaſure, who knows what is beſt for all: Who tho' he take pleaſure in his Works, it is becauſe they are his, made according to his Wiſdom and Goodneſs. He who is the cauſe of their Being, is conſequently the cauſe of any Pleaſure he can be thought to take in them, as well as of that which Creatures may take in one another. Now Pleaſure and Good, being the ſame, it is to be conſidered as in the different Subjects, God, or his Creatures; God being Self-ſufficient, nothing can affect him with Diſpleaſure, or uneaſie Thoughts, all his Pleaſure ariſing

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from within, even from his unchangeable Self, who cannot will to be displeas'd, or uneasie, nor can any thing be suppos'd to force him to be displeased. Nor can the Creature properly be said to desire its own Uneasse or Displeasure, its Pleasure lying in having its Will; if it could desire to be displeas'd, it could will, and not will at the same time, which is a Contradiction as bad as to say a Will is not a Will. But the Creatures Will becomes evil two ways. First, When it wills or desires that which in it self is a Good (yea perhaps the greatest Good) but to it impossible, or not belonging; as to be satisfied in its own proper Will, without regard of anothers, as if the reason of Good were to depend on its Will, which is a Prerogative only belonging and possible to God, whose Will can give Being to things, and who is sufficient in himself. The Evil of this (and indeed all sinful Desire includes it) lies in this, that the Creature wills a Contradiction, or Absurdity, and not only so, but foolishly and unjustly attempts to rob God of his Prerogative, or his very Being, and to become God it self, or to be another God equal with him. And tho' this Attempt, which is virtually in all Sin, can really take nothing from God, or make him uneasie, yet in common Speech, or speaking improperly as if we were speaking of Men, God is said to be displeas'd or angry, with it; but it is indeed no more but that it is not according to God's Will, he does not will it, or does not take pleasure in the Creatures Folly and Absurdity. So that the Creature thus affecting Supream Good, does not only commit the Evil Act of Injustice in attempting to take what is not its own, and of Folly, in affecting what is impossible; but also has will'd that which will bring in the Consequence, its own Displeasure; because willing what it can't have, while it so wills it is uneasie, or else is so when it re-

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flects on its Folly. Secondly, The Creature wills Evil in willing that which has really but the Appearance of Good, [Appearance, I ſay, for at leaſt a Seeming, or Suppoſed Good, muſt be acknowledg'd the Object of Man's Will] as when a Man wills a thing which when he tries, has no Satisfaction in it at all, or when he wills a created Good, I mean the Enjoyment of ſome Creature that does really give him ſome ſmall Satisfaction; but that preſent and ſmall Satisfaction, takes away a greater and more laſting it might have had, if it had not will'd that thing; it being according to the Will of God, as well as for Man's Intereſt that Man be as much as poſſible pleas'd: Man really wills Evil, tho' under the form of Good, or even tho' there is ſome Good in the thing when he wills that which tends to hinder, or leſſen his own Pleaſure or Happineſs, which is according to the Will of God. Thirdly, A Man's Will is evil when, altho' he will that which is in it ſelf a Good, and good for him he wills it ſo, or in ſuch Circumſtances as hinders good from another Man; for there is the ſame reaſon why another Man ſhould be pleas'd as much as may be, as that I ſhould be ſo; and in hindering the Good of another I want the reaſonable Acts of Love and Juſtice, and not only ſo but even alſo hinder Good from my ſelf in thus diſorderly ſeeking it; for I could be more happy and pleas'd if all my Fellow Creatures were ſo, than if they be not; and the more of them happy and pleas'd, the more may I; for the Unhappineſs or Diſpleaſure of others, adds to my Unhappineſs, if I have been any way the cauſe of their Unhappineſs, when I ſee my Injuſtice; or if I have not, as I am affected with Compaſſion, or as I therein do not ſee ſo much of the Manifeſtation of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, in the order of his Creatures, I have not ſuch cauſe of Joy, as if I ſee my own

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pleaſure as it were multiplied in my Fellow Creatures, or have the Satisfaction of being inſtrumental to their good. And perhaps from divers other reaſons, the more of my Fellows are happy, the more in degree may I be ſo. But let us conſider wherein the Evil of Man's Will conſiſts, for more Clearneſs in an Inſtance or two. A Man deſires a Bodily thing in the Application of which to his Body, God has annexed a Pleaſure to the Mind; this Gratification of the Senſe is good, and God cauſes it; but when the Man wills it in ſuch a Circumſtance, as of neceſſity robs him of a greater Pleaſure he might otherwiſe have had, or gives him in the conſequence greater Diſpleaſure than the want of that thing could be, the willing of that thing becomes an Evil to him in abating his Happineſs, and which is worſe an ungrateful Slight to his Maker, a greater Diſorder in not conſulting his Will to guide him, or not confiding in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, who would have the Man as happy as might be. As the Pleaſure a Man receives in Eating and Drinking is good; but if he eat or drink too much, he dulls his Appetite, and renders it leſs ſenſible, and often lays the foundation of a Diſeaſe that not only affects him with its conſequent Diſpleaſure, but renders him incapable of the pleaſure of Eating and Drinking for a much longer time than he had of pleaſure when he diſorderly, or immoderately ſought it.

Or if he do not thus abate his Happineſs, if he rob his Neighbour for it, that act of Injuſtice never fails one way or other to give him more Diſpleaſure than he had Pleaſure ſo unduly attained. So likewiſe the Pleaſure in the Act of Generation is good; but when ever a Man goes out of the order God has ſet Man in the reaſon of that Satisfaction, he acts Evil, either in rendring himſelf leſs capable thereof, or by procuring himſelf far greater Evil or Diſpleaſure,

ſure, in the many Miſchiefs that the ſatisfying that Deſire, any other way than with a Wife, naturally produces to him, and his Fellow Creatures, with the troubleſome Reflection that he will ſometime have on ſuch Diſorders, when he ſees not only that he hath deceiv'd himſelf, but alſo the Unreaſonableneſs of his Disbelief, ſlighting, disbelieving, and affronting his Maker in not ſtudying, but rejecting his moſt wiſe Order and Direction. So that if a Man wills that which is good, but impoſſible to him, or what belongs not to him, that which is but little good, and takes away more good, hinders good to another, is but an appearance of good, his Will is evil. He that deſires his Neighbour's Wife, wills Evil tho' ſhe be the beſt Woman in the World; for tho' ſhe be good, ſhe is not his; he invades another's Property, and ſo wills an Injuſtice; nor can he have his deſire without abating the Happineſs of his Neighbour, and the Woman's too in her becoming Evil, and finding its Conſequences.

And here I cannot but take notice of the a fooliſh Abuſe, common among Mankind; that is, they confidently call the Deſire One Man has to Another's Wife, or a Woman to Another's Husband, with all ſuch diſorderly Deſires, by the name of Love, meaning Love to the Perſon deſired, when it is nothing leſs; being always that which ſo far as it is ſatisfied divers ways effects the Unhappineſs of the Perſon ſaid to be beloved, which ſuch a Lover can hardly be ſo blind as not to ſee. Yea farther, that it is but a Self-love, (if it can be call'd Love at all) and a groſly miſtaken one too, rendering the Lover himſelf more unhappy than he would have been had he never ſo affected, tho' he enjoy the Object of his Love, I would ſay his Luſt, for that is the proper name on't.

But to draw towards a Concluſion of this matter; I ſay, whatever a Man deſires, the Act of deſire is free; to ſuppoſe otherwiſe would be all one as to ſuppoſe Volition not to be Volition, or a Will not a Will. A Will cannot be ſaid to be compell'd; for tho' it cannot but Act, or Be, it is freely, or willing, Compulſion, and Volition are contrary and incompatible. But the Will is led by Arguments, and at leaſt Appearances of Good. If there could be ſuppos'd but one Object of the Will, it could not but apply to that, yet it would be freely; but where there are many Objects, it chooſes by appearance. But Man having the Faculty of Reaſoning as well as Deſiring, ought to ſuſpend the Acts of his Will by a kind of Indifferency, at leaſt as to their Effects, till he is ſure his choice will be good. The Will is led by Arguments: I ſay, whether the Act of Will be according to God's Will, or no, and Volition is Volition, or to be willing is to be willing. And a Man is (in ſhort) more properly ſaid to will, or deſire Evilly, than to deſire an Evil, I mean to himſelf; for that a Man may be ſo wicked as often to will, and conſequently freely, yea and knowingly an Evil to another Man, and ſometimes effects it, and would alſo affect God with an Evil, or a real Diſpleaſure, if it were poſſible that Man's fooliſh Will could be ſo done, is daily apparent, and true beyond all diſpute. And that Sinners may be ſaid to will Evil continually, is not to be underſtood as if they never deſired any thing that is good, but that every act of their deſire, tho' they deſire Good, hath ſome Evil Circumſtance or other, as an Evil Manner, Evil Means, or Evil Ends, *&c.*

Now God, as aboveſaid, cannot will either an Evil, or Evilly, his Will being the Rule of Good; and to ſuppoſe God to will Evil, would be all one as to ſuppoſe him to will what he don't will: Nor

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is it for want of Power or Freedom that God can't will or do Evil; but it is rather a Note of Power that he cannot be deceived, but can know all things as they are, and cannot be ſuppos'd ignorant of any Truth, becauſe he is the Exemplar and Cauſe of all Truths: He cannot be ſuppos'd to do amiſs, becauſe he is All-perfect: He cannot will one thing now, another anon, becauſe he is unchangeable, always knowing what is beſt.

And as God, in whoſe Being is no now and then, cannot will contrary to his own Will; ſo he cannot be ſuppos'd (without the height of Contradiction) to will that the Creature ſhould will contrary to his Maker's Will; this would be to ſuppoſe God to will contrary to his own Will, or will a thing, and yet not will it. Beſides, if God pleaſe to make known his Will, which he muſt be ſuppos'd to do one way or other, or the Creature cannot well obey it, or be determined to its Duty, when the Creature knows it, or has reaſon to believe God wills ſo and ſo, he can have no reaſon to ſuppoſe God can have a Secret Will, or Determination, that the Creature ſhould do the contrary: This would be to ſuppoſe God a Lyer, and to deceive his Creature, yea to deny God to be either true or good. I have the greateſt reaſon to believe God would have me do what he commands me, that is any way cauſes me to take for his Will, and that he commands me what is beſt for me to do. I cannot err here, if I am ſure he commands. If God could be ſuppos'd to will one thing, and command the contrary, he would contradict himſelf; for the Commands of God can be nothing but his Will made known to the Creature, and he cannot be ſuppoſed to fruſtrate his own Will. Such an Abſurdity fooliſh Man would hardly be capable of as to will his Child to do, what he commands him not to do; or to command him to

do that which he wills he ſhould not do: Yet I have known ſome ſo bold, or inconſiderate, or diſpleas'd with the good Will of God, as to affirm in plain words, ſo unreaſonable a thing of God, as that he will'd Man ſhould do what he commanded him not to do. But God has done very great things, both within us and without us (and will do) to vindicate his Wiſdom, Truth and Goodneſs, againſt all thoſe that are ſo hardy or fooliſh, as to deny them, either plainly, or in conſequence.

26. And tho' God may oblige his Creature to a thing for a time, (eſpecially in that which ſeems an Arbitrary Command) which he may not will him to do always, but afterwards ſomething elſe, it is no Contradiction or Change in God's Will, (who wills that which is firſt, and laſt in reſpect to the Creature, altogether) but the Creature being changeable, what is beſt for him, or his Duty under one Circumſtance, is not ſo under another: Which Will of God the Creature comes to know part now, part anon. As for inſtance; God wills me to do that when I am a Child, or a Servant, which is not my Duty when a Father, or a Maſter; and that when I am a Father, or Maſter, which is not, or ceaſeth to be my Duty when I am in no ſuch relation.

An Arbitrary Command of God I call that which Man ſees not, or not clearly the reaſon of to himſelf; nor has any evident Argument to perſwade the doing, or not doing of it, but becauſe God commands.

That which is not evidently a Natural Duty, but ſome Expreſs Command, God may pleaſe to give the Creature without giving him the reaſon of it. Such a thing alſo God may oblige his Creature to, if he pleaſe only for a time: But thoſe Duties that reſult from the very notion of our being God's Crea-

Creatures, as Love, Reverence, Truſt, Dependance, &c. are unchangeable while God is God, and the Creatures are Creatures, whether God expreſly command them or no. But if God ſhall expreſly command his Creature a thing, and yet not give the Creature the Reaſon of it as good to the Creature, it muſt nevertheleſs neceſſarily be ſuppos'd to be good, and muſt ſo far at leaſt appear to him as that he ſees it is not evil, or contrary to a natural Duty, or former Command. And if we conſider, we ſhall find it moſt reaſonable and convenient for Man to obey the Will of God, not only in things that are apparently agreeable to Man's relation to his Maker, and for Man's Benefit; but in things he may not readily ſee the Agreeableneſs or Benefit of: if firſt he be ſure God commands them, tho' therein God may ſeem for the preſent to limit, or abridge Man's Happineſs; concluding God is wiſer and better than the Creature. For the Creature is beholden to God for all he has; and if God deny him ſomething that he may now fancy a Good, he has no more reaſon to be diſpleaſed with God, (who arbitrarily gave him his Being) than becauſe he made him a Man, and did not make him an Angel. As a Man who ſhould have the Gift of a good Eſtate from a Perſon who was no way obliged to him, would be thought moſt unreaſonable to deny a ſmall quit Rent as an Acknowledgment to his Benefactor, from whence he received the Eſtate.

Such a Reſervation, of at leaſt a Seeming Good from Man, was very ſuitable in his firſt Creation Make, and Excellency, as he was in the Likeneſs of God, Lord of all the Inferiour Creatures, that he might thereby acknowledge his Subjection and Dependance on God, and God's Sovereignty and Dominion over him. And yet it muſt alſo be affirm'd moſt for Man's Profit to part with this Acknowledg-

ment, tho' the thing he fore-go ſhould be ſuppos'd a Real, and not a Fancied Good for him; becauſe he would have kept a vaſtly greater Good than can be ſuppos'd in any one particular Creature, that is the Satisfaction comes to a dependent Mind in obedience to his beloved Maker and Suſtainer, with the moſt pleaſing ſenſe of his Love, and Favour to him, the Sweet Familiarity, Preſence, or Converſe with his God, which was conſequently interrupted, or deſtroyed by Diſobedience. Yet it may be a queſtion whether what-ever God may be ſuppoſed to will Man to abſtain from, is not in it ſelf inconvenient for him, and whether it may not be thought a ſufficient tryal of Man's Submiſſion and Acknowledgment, when only the Reaſon of the Command is reſerved from him. Whatever God has created is certainly Good, and for ſome wiſe End: Thoſe things we call *Poyſons*, or which eaten, or applied in a ſmall quantity, will deſtroy the Frame of Man's Body, are good ſome way or other; but it is not always neceſſary Man ſhould know the Uſes of them.

If a loving and wiſe Father a Phyſician, ſhould thus warn his beloved Son; Meddle not with that Drugg tho' it hath a pleaſant Taſte, if you eat it 'twill kill you; giving him no farther account of it, or for what uſe he keeps it: Yet this Son would not believe it, or be ſatisfied tell he had tryed the Experiment, would he not be highly to blame, as diſcrediting his Father's Truth and Goodneſs, and diſobeying his Will? How could he come without Shame to his Father for a Remedy? So much more is Man blame-worthy if he refuſe the Direction of God in the uſe of the Creatures what way ſoever he gives it.

27. But the keeping all the Commands of God, or whatſoever he can be known to will, certainly tends

tends to Man's Happineſs; and tho' he be obliged to abſtain from many things good in themſelves, or rather from the uſe of them, according to his own haſty inconſiderate Fancy; yet a general Conformity to the Will of God, is ſo far from being an unpleaſant Burthen or Yoak, that it is the only way of the greateſt Happineſs and Pleaſure: The more obedient, the more eaſie, the more joyous a Man is, or will ſoon be. And that Man is not perpetually, and as much as may be ſo, is becauſe in ſome thing or other he has diſobeyed, or yet diſobeys, or the Diſobedience of ſome other Creature affects him: But to be fully obedient, is the height of the Creatures Felicity. The life of Obedience even at preſent is not a way of Unpleaſantneſs, Sadneſs and Thraldom; but a Path of Pleaſure, Joy and Liberty. There is nothing in doing the Will of God that in it ſelf tends to make a Man uneaſie, or that hinders his being pleas'd or happy as much as poſſible; and whoever fancieth there is, it is from ſome Miſtake; as either a Suppoſition of that to be the Will of God which really is not, or that the Actions of the Creature tend to one thing when indeed they tend to another. I cannot forbear not only to aſſert this as that of which I have a moſt clear Rational Conviction; but alſo to witneſs it, as having here had ſomething of unqueſtionable Experience: And that ſhort Pleaſure which a Sinner may take in an unduly enjoy'd Senſual Good, in ſtealing or ſnatching as it were from God what he would in better Time and Order have given him; I have found more than equall'd by the bare Satisfaction in the Thoughts of not having tranſgreſs'd, were the pleaſure of Innocency no longer than the pleaſure in Tranſgreſſing. But in obeying are ſometimes, even in this life, Joys unſpeakable, as Fore-taſtes of Joys future, full and perpetual, accompanying a State of

perfect and perpetual Obedience. Thoſe that know nothing of theſe Felicities that are greater than can be in the diſorderly Enjoyment, or abuſe of God's Creatures; let them but try the Experiment (as I have done) of God's Goodneſs, of the pleaſure of Divine Love, as they eaſily and freely may, and they will be for ever convinced. Neither let any think they looſe any thing, even of the good of the Creatures themſelves, by being reſtrain'd, or rather directed by whatever Rule God gives us how to uſe them; no, he envies us not the greateſt Pleaſure we are capable of taking in them. We cannot be ſuppos'd while Creatures, to be capable of all Pleaſure, or of full Satisfaction in Creatures. God has indeed given Man a quick Senſe of Good, or Delight even in the uſe of Bodily things; and that not that it ſhould be unſatisfied, but the Creatures deſign'd for Man's uſe are ſo numerous, that they cannot all be uſed by any Man, no nor by all Men; nor can a Man enjoy what he is capable of enjoying altogether, and at once. So that where ever God forbids what we could deſire, it is but where a ſmaller Enjoyment will hinder our having a greater; one fruſtrate our having many; a ſmall Preſent and ſhort one, diſappoint us of a future, great, and laſting one. And what Folly is it to be diſpleaſed, becauſe God ſome way forbids a Bodily or Senſual Pleaſure, that we may have a better, a Rational, or Mental one? or a Joy in a Creature, where it would hinder our Rejoycing in the Creator himſelf? I believe if we had time to trace in particular, the Diſorders of Men, we ſhould find that all and every of them (even their moſt beloved ones) do but abate their Felicity. Where is any that does not tend to deſtroy our Health, or Peace, or Wealth, or Eaſe, *&c.* and ſo bring upon us ſome Miſchief or other, by which the little Pleaſures in them are very much out-ballanced?

ced? Is it not highly reaſonable, as well as for our Intereſt, that God who is moſt wiſe and good, ſhould be our Chooſer, if he condeſcends to chooſe for us? Is it not the greateſt Preſumption, and Affront to our Maker, who is the Cauſe of all our Good, that we ſhould act as if we knew better than he what is beſt for us? Is it not the greateſt Injuſtice not to love him, and ſtudy his Will to obey it, who has no profit by us, but does all for our Benefit? If we may receive all the Profit, ſhall we deny to give him all the Honour?

For God indeed cannot be profited by his Creatures; he ſees his own Excellencies in them as Shadows, but in himſelf as in the Subſtance; but there can be no increaſe of his Perfections, who is Self-ſufficient neceſſarily. Nor can Man's Diſobedience take away any thing from his Happineſs, or affect him with the leaſt Infelicity. Sin does indeed obſcure his Glory; but not from himſelf, but only from the Sinners, who thereby looſe that moſt pleaſant and happy Viſion. And a cauſe of that great diſlike of Sin in God, which hath been ſometimes expreſs'd by the Symbols of Anger and Wrath, is that he loves his Creature ſo well, that he cannot approve any Action that in the leaſt hides his Glory and Goodneſs, from his beloved Works. And as God neither looſes nor gets any thing by the Creatures Sin, or Obedience; ſo in particular his Juſtice or Righteouſneſs, cannot be impaired. He is not unrighteous or unjuſt, tho' he ſuffers Man to be unrighteous and unjuſt: The Creature cannot poſſibly bring any change upon God, or lay him under any neceſſity or obligation; God alone can oblige himſelf by his Promiſe, and that is not properly an Obligation in God, for 'tis but the Declaration of his conſtant and free-will. To ſay God cannot in Juſtice break his Promiſe, is no more than to ſay he will

will not. If he leave the Creature to reap the fruits of Sin, he does him no wrong; if he perſwade the Creature to leave his Sin and be happy, he wrongs not himſelf: He can neither looſe nor get any thing by the Creatures Sin and Unhappineſs, or Repentance and Happineſs. God is eſſentially righteous, or juſt, before Creatures had a Being; and his Eſſential Righteouſneſs, or Juſtice (as I have elſe-where ſaid) is to love, and approve himſelf, and to do his own Will. His Juſtice in relation to the Creatures, is his Approbation of them ſo far as they are his Work, and according to his Will; what he has made, he ſhews his Approbation of by upholding and continuing the Being of. He approves not the Creatures denial of him in diſobeying his Will, but ſhews the greateſt Teſtimonies of his Diſlike of its Diſobedience: So that if the Creature goes on in willing or acting contrary to God's Will, God will not; or which is all one, he cannot make it happy and joyous, in its continuing ſo to do, unleſs he could make it to be God, and ceaſe to be God himſelf. For the Creature cannot be ſatisfied with willing Good, while it wills Evil; nor can it be pleaſed in having its Will, while it wills that which is impoſſible; and while it leaves God's Will, or willing that which is good and poſſible, it muſt be miſerable, more or leſs, according to the ſtrength of its Evil Will; and if it for ever goes on ſeeking Pleaſure in vain, or to ſatisfie its Will ſo as it cannot be ſatisfied, it muſt for ever be unhappy, and reap the Natural Fruit, and Work of its own Doings; unleſs and until it acknowledge God's Will Sovereign, juſt and good, and its own Will as diſagreeing with its Maker, unjuſt and evil, and that it ought to be ſubject, and be perſwaded to change its fooliſh Will, and deſire to know and do the Will of God for the future; that is, unleſs or until the Sinner repent.

28. But

28. But the Creature having once choſe its own Will againſt the Will of God, having committed one Act of Rebellion againſt its Maker is, or ſeems much more inclinable and propenſe to go on, and perſiſt in its Sin, than to repent and will well again. For having once affected to be its own Lord and Arbiter, or to be independant, which is the greateſt Perfection, and beſt Manner of Being, (tho' impoſſible to a Creature) it goes on with a ſtrong Deſire; whoſe perpetual Acts, perſuing ſo great a Thing, hinder its Underſtanding to judge, and reflect on the Impoſſibility, Abſurdity, Injuſtice, and Conſequents of ſuch an Attempt. And every freſh act of Sin does but ſtrengthen its Diſobedience, in which perhaps it would go on for ever if God did not upon its miſtake, give it abundant Arguments by one means or other, to bring it to a ſtand, cauſe it to conſider, convict it of its Folly and Diſorder, and ſo change its Will: Till which change is effectually begun, it is always, and only endeavouring the Impoſſibility of ſeparating the unpleaſant, or bitter effects it finds either in, or following, or fears may find the fruits of its diſorderly Actions: So that it would not be ſaved from its evil Will, the Cauſe, but from the Diſpleaſure it finds attending it, the Effect.

29. But when it is once throughly convinced that its own Will diſagreeing with the Will of God, is an impoſſible way, or means of Happineſs, or laſting Pleaſure; and ſees the Unreaſonableneſs and Badneſs of ſuch an Attempt, the Soul is very unapt to believe that God will forgive: And conſidering it Self and its Sin, more than God and his Goodneſs, the ſight of its moſt irrational Acts which it hath committed, with the Tendency thereof, often makes ſuch a horrid Impreſſion on the Soul, and takes up its Thoughts ſo much, that tho' God has given Arguments enough to perſwade that he wills all Men

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to repent, with various and clear Notices that he is ready to forgive, and yet make happy thoſe that by perſiſting in Rebellion do not render themſelves uncapable of Forgiveneſs and Happineſs; yet it is commonly blind to ſee God as he is, and is more apt to fly from him than come to him, meaſuring God by its own ſtandard, it having been very apt to account it Juſtice to revenge the croſſing its Will, on thoſe it was able to affect, thinks God like it ſelf; not conſidering that the perfect Good-will of God cannot take Pleaſure or Satisfaction in the Miſeries of his Creatures, tho' they are Enemies, much leſs in their Sin, or continuing Enmity, the formal Cauſe of their Unhappineſs.

But tho' Man is ſo apt to look upon God as an inraged Enemy, hardly to be appeas'd, ſevere to reckon with the Sinner, reſolved that the Sinner ſhall never be happy, unleſs ſomething can be given him to purchaſe his favour, that he values more than the Sinner's Repentance, or new Obedience: Yet, I ſay, tho' Man is ſo apt to look upon God as ſuch, like himſelf, we muſt affirm that God is not, nor can he properly be ſaid to be, an Enemy to Man, or any of his Creatures, as they are to him, and to one another. He hates, or ſets himſelf againſt nothing but their Sins, their Unhappineſs; wills nothing but what is for their good, nor can he but love whatſoever is his own Work; as the Beings of all his Creatures are, and their Good Order, which is their Happineſs; therefore he cannot but will their Reconcilement to him, or to their Duty.

30. Now all that God hath done, does, or will do in order to Man's Recovery from Sin and Miſery, tends unto this one thing; To bring Man again to will as God wills. Where-ever this is done, it is done, and the End of God's Dealing with Sinners is accompliſhed, whatever the means were by which it was

was brought about; and ſo far as we are come towards this, ſo far we are in the way of Salvation, or ſaved. To will as God wills, or to love our God with all our Heart, Soul and Strength, and our Fellow Creature as our ſelf, is the whole Law, that God does ſo much to perſwade Man to keep. To will, and n'ill the ſame, is perfect Love; and Love is manifeſted by doing the Will of the Beloved. In doing the Will of God is Life, I mean Happineſs not only in this Preſent State, but alſo in that which is to come.

31. And that there is a Life to come, and Immortality, diſcoverable clearly even by Reaſon, and divers Notices thereof implanted in Nature, we ſhall a little attempt to ſhew.

That Men are mortal, and live in this Life but a little while, is the experience of the whole World. That the Body is ſubject to decay, or the Order of its Motions wherein its Life conſiſts, liable to be deſtroyed and ceaſe; and by another as to Life, diſorderly Motion to be ſeparated, and ſo its Organical Figure to be ſpoiled and changed, all Men perceive by the leaſt Obſervation. But that Death is not a Termination or End of our Being, I think will appear by theſe Conſiderations. Firſt, We have no reaſon to conclude that the End or Deſign of our Being, is fully accompliſhed in this Life. The Manifeſtations of God's Perfections to Man, and Man's Pleaſure or Happineſs in beholding them, (the End of Man) by reaſon of Sin, are not ſo clear and ſo great in this Life as they may be, ſhould be, and are to be deſired. God is not ſeen and enjoy'd by any now, as he may be, by ſome but very little. The deſires of ſome (I may ſay of all) that deſire God, are not ſatisfied in this ſhort and ſinful State. None have unerringly and ſufficiently beheld the Divine Excellencies, and acknowledged God as he ought to

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be acknowledged. Some have lived and died, and hardly ever truely confeſs'd and own'd their Maker; few or none have loved and obeyed him to their capacity, and been as pleas'd or happy in him as they may be: Therefore it is reaſonable to conclude (nay we cannot well think otherwiſe) that there is a Life to come wherein the Ends of the Creation ſhall be accompliſhed. God cannot be thought to let his Works periſh without fulfilling his, or their true Ends in them. The Good, thoſe that have been ſo far convicted of the Diſorders of Sin, as to repent, and change their Minds from willing contrary to God's Will, in ſome meaſure to will as God wills, and to deſire that they may do ſo more, yea perfectly, and always: Thoſe that have ſome-what beheld God lovely, have not yet, or in this Life, been brought up to ſo great a degree of Obedience, as they are convinced is their Duty, nor ſeen ſo much of God's Excellence as they deſire to ſee, nor been ſatisfied with the ſenſe of his Love as they would. If theſe their Deſires, Duties and Happineſs, are good, convenient, ſuitable to the Natures of God, and his Creatures, as evidently they appear to be, certainly God wills them ſometime or other to be, and that more than the Creature can will them, becauſe God is the Supreme Good-will. So that it is altogether unlikely that the Good Man ſhould periſh, and not attain the Good that he is capable of; deſires, is convenient, and God wills more than he. Nor is it any more likely that the Bad Man, he that hath ſeen no greater Delight than in contradicting the Will and Order of God, by the diſorderly Enjoyment of the Creatures ſhould periſh, or ceaſe under ſo great a Miſtake as never to ſee, and be convinced of the Abſurdity and Evil of proſecuting his own proper Will as the chief Good; as never to find that the way of Happineſs is not in acting contrary to the

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Will of God. That God ſhould have an Intelligent Creature never to be made acknowledge his Maker, is a thing hard to be thought. It is more probable that even the Bad Man will remain one way or other, to be convinced of his Diſorders, of his Rebellion againſt God, Injuſtice, and want of Goodneſs to his Fellow Creatures. The Good Man in this Life ſeems often to be the Man of Sorrow, the Son of Adverſity, that doth not gather the full-ripe Fruits of his Repentance and Obedience; being among a world of unhappy and injurious Impenitents. Therefore it is requiſite there ſhould be a Future State, wherein he may reap in Joy what he has ſowed in Tears. The Evil Man ſeems often to be the Man of Joy and Pleaſure in this Life; he rejoyceth, and even glorieth in his Diſorders, yea in that very great one of afflicting the Man that is better than he: Now it is moſt equal and juſt that he ſhould ſome time or other come to ſee the Good Man before-hand with him, rejoycing, and happy in God, when he is ſorowing to ſee he hath turn'd from the fountain of Joy and Bleſſedneſs. Theſe things are not accompliſhed in this Life, therefore we muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe a Future.

Again; It is certain that no Creature can cauſe it ſelf, or another to ceaſe: Nothing but the withdrawing the Same Power that cauſed the Creature to be, and continueth its Being, can be ſuppos'd a reaſon of its Ceſſation. We can prove no ſuch Death as an Adnihillation of any thing; nor does it appear to any that conſider the matter, that even any Bodily Creature ceaſeth to be. But the contrary might be ſhewn by many Arguments, if it were doubted of: Even thoſe things which ſeem to the ignorant and inconſiderate, to be moſt likely to be deſtroyed, ſuch as things that are burnt; I can at any time demonſtrate, even to the eye, that none of their parts

ceaſe,

ceaſe, but are only ſeparated, or altered. The Death of the Body is but ſome kind of alteration, or change of its Modes or Circumſtances; as a Separation of the parts of its Organical Structure, or an Alteration of ſuch and ſuch Motions, requiſite to continue its Particular Mechaniſm, or Animal Oeconomy. The Body remains, I mean all the Matter of it, after the Diviſion of its parts; and it cannot rationally be ſuppos'd that the Mind, the more Subſtantial, and (as all are ready to acknowledge) the more Noble Part of Man ſhould ſuffer more alteration by the Diſſolution of the Body, than the Body it ſelf does. The Change the Body undergoes is apparent, but what Change you will ſay may the Mind be reaſonnably ſuppos'd to ſuffer at its Separation from the Body, or whether not enough to be call'd Death? Many Treatiſes have been written, and Diſcourſes made to prove the Immortality of the Soul, and ſome for its ſuppos'd Mortality; but the Authors have not been ſo happy as to agree in the Notion of Life and Death with one another, nor all ſo conſiderate as to fix any determinate Notion for themſelves, or to tell their Readers what they mean by its Living or Dying; ſo that it may be true or falſe for them. But I ſhall here ſtate the queſtion more plainly, and tell you firſt, that by the Life of the Soul, I mean a Continuation of Thinking, or of Underſtanding and Willing. Where there are theſe Actions and Paſſions, there is enough to be call'd Life; and that which better deſerves to be named Living than any whatſoever, Organization, and Motion in Bodies. And the plain Queſtion is this; Whether upon the Death, or Diſſolution of the Body, Thinking wholly ceaſeth? A Ceſſation of ſome of the Modes of Thinking, cannot be enough to be properly call'd the Death of the Soul; for ſo it would not only be always dying, but dead, as it alters ſo continually,

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at leaſt every night and day. An Alteration of ſome of the Modes of Thinking may in a figurative and improper Senſe be called Death; but the Queſtion is not of any ſuch Death. It is probable that many, if not all thoſe Thoughts and Ideas we have by occaſion, or on condition of our Body as ſo and ſo diſpoſed, may ceaſe; tho' it cannot eaſily be thought abſolutely neceſſary: for we cannot conceive the Body to be a natural Occaſion of any Thoughts, but ſo by the Will of God; who if he pleaſe, we may well think, can cauſe the ſame Ideas and Thoughts without it, tho' it ſeems not to any purpoſe, or probable that he will. For on the other hand, it is more likely that God permitted Death for the Ceſſation of thoſe Thoughts (or at leaſt many of them) the Body is the occaſion of, ſince Man's fall into Sin, in Good and Bad: For as much as we are tempted to moſt of our Diſorders by occaſion of the Body, and to gratifie ſome Senſe or other diſorderly, or beſides the Direction and Will of God, ſeems to be the firſt and moſt conſtant Temptation every Man is drawn aſide with. Now the Good Man, or Repenting Sinner, through the Goodneſs of God, (on this Suppoſition of ſuch Thoughts ceaſing) gets this by Death, tho' in it ſelf an Evil, that he is freed from all the Allurements of this Life occaſioned by his uſe of this Body. The undue Gratifications of Senſe can now no more perſwade him, the unprofitable care of avoiding little Bodily Diſpleaſures, now takes not up his Thoughts, the Difficulties from the Injuſtice and Cruelty of Sinners preſs him now no more to act againſt his Maker's Will; but he ſeems perfectly freed from Temptation, having perhaps now no Object of deſire preſent but God, and nothing to interpoſe for his Love, as a Rival with his Maker. Nothing now ſeems neceſſary for him to know but God, and himſelf: Nor needs he, or values he, could

he have them, any little pleasures in Creatures when he is at God, the Fountain and Cause of all. On the other side, the Evil Man also looses all those Gratifications of Sense he so much affected, and erringly counted his chiefest Good; and must needs find that he foolishly set his Heart on that which would not make him happy, but so soon left him. And as his Will is not reconcil'd, and subjected to God's; but he desires still that which cannot be, God cannot so communicate himself to him to make him joyous, but he must be subject to all that Anguish that the Reflection on the loss of the Creatures he so much delighted in, and that he hath miss'd the Fountain of all Good can cause in him; with all the Vexation and Trouble that all the disorderly Thoughts of such a Soul can raise to it self. But to come to the point in hand again; It cannot well be thought that the Soul or Mind of either Good or Bad should die, or Thinking wholly and for ever cease; or yet for a time, upon the Body's Death; because the Continuation of Thinking, or Life of the Soul can't rationally be suppos'd to depend on the Body, (a thing more ignoble than it self, being very unlikely to be its cause) but upon the Will of God its Author. And God cannot well be suppos'd thus to let any of his Creatures cease, or disown his Works that are good, as the Beings of all things are; much less can Minds, the Intelligent and Active Beings, be thought to be annihilated, or cease Thinking so soon, and to no purpose. Change they may, and do, as all Creatures are mutable; but what of God would be seen in the Cessation of any, especially of Minds, who are the only kind of Beings capable of beholding God? If the Soul ceaseth to think, and so dies more than a figurative Death, it ceaseth to be; for Thinking and Mind are the same Being: which if you will not be perswaded to believe,

lieve, you muſt at leaſt acknowledge them inſeparable. For a Mind that does not think, or a Thinker that cannot think, is a Contradiction; and to call that a Power or Agent, that can do nothing, is abſurd; for that which can do nothing, is no Power or Agent; and a Power or Agent that will do nothing, is as great a Contradiction; for Willing is Doing, even Thinking.

Again; Nothing is more ſtrongly implanted, I may ſay concreated in the Mind of Man, than a deſire to continue; and if Being is good, the Continuation of Being is good; if the Deſire to continue be good, God is the Cauſe and Implanter of ſuch a Deſire, and conſequently wills we ſhould have ſuch a Deſire. I think none can but deſire to continue, if it were the Will of God we ſhould ceaſe to be, the deſire to continue would be a Sin; but God can't be ſuppos'd to will we ſhould deſire that which he don't will ſhould be; that would be to will us to will contrary to his Will. Now whatever God wills to continue, cannot be ſuppoſed to ceaſe. If God wills to manifeſt himſelf in, and to his Creatures, to be loved and feared by them, he muſt continue them; for by their Ceſſation, all theſe things will ceaſe and be impoſſible. Every Good Man that loves God, would continue to love him; it's God's Will he ſhould love him: Can God be ſuppos'd to make him ceaſe to love his Maker? To what purpoſe? Let it but be granted, that it is not God's Will I ſhould ceaſe to love him, and the Immortality of my Soul is ſecured; for while I love I live, *viz.* mentally. Nor can the Evil Man, that don't love God, nor fear to act contrary to his Will, be ſuppos'd to be for ever, or for a long time exempted from the Evils of his Rebellion againſt his Maker, or rendered by God himſelf uncapable of all Conviction: Or can it be thought probable, that God ſhould make Creatures

to deny him a little while, and then ceaſe under ſo great a Miſtake as never to believe and confeſs God to be their Sovereign Lord, and Sufficient Benefactor. But if God approve himſelf, and his own Works, he will rather continue them, and ſuffer them to make themſelves miſerable, and find they are not God's, than not aſſert himſelf God, one way or other, to all his Intelligent Creatures. Beſides, the Soul either of Good or Bad cannot with any reaſon be ſuppos'd to ceaſe for a time, and then be again; for if it ceaſe to be it is not, and nothing can be properly affirm'd or deny'd, but of that which is. Where there is no Being, neither Life nor Death can be aſſerted. So that if a Soul ceaſe to be, and a Soul be afterwards, it cannot be the ſame, but a new one, to whom can be charged no account of the ceaſed Souls paſt Actions. There muſt be a Continuation of Being, or there can be no Identity or Sameneſs; and the Eſſentials of the thing muſt remain, or there is not the thing, but another. If there be not a Continuation of Thinking and Conſcience of former Thoughts, it cannot be conceived how the Sameneſs of a Mind can be aſcertained; and if a Soul in this preſent State be wicked, and ceaſe at the Diſſolution of the Body, it can neither be juſt nor good, that a new one ſhould be miſerable, becauſe the ceaſed Soul was unrighteous, nor be determined what new one ſhould be ſo: Nor that a Soul, penitent in this World, ſhould not it ſelf be happy hereafter, but have its hopes of future Happineſs utterly fruſtrated, and be put off with the Mock-happineſs of being happy in another Soul. What Encouragement can I have to my Duty, if I ſuppoſe I muſt not continue to the Perfection and Happineſs of my Obedience; but muſt periſh, and only now be contented to think that God will create a Soul hereafter, and perhaps give it my Duſt, to be happy, becauſe I only began

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to be holy? Or how ſhall I be deterr'd from Sin, if I am perſwaded I my ſelf muſt be diſcontinued, and that it is not I but another Mind that is in danger of everlaſting Vexation; (it may be with my old Body) if I now die impenitent? When we ſay a Man is dead, (if we talk like Rational Creatures) we muſt have ſome determinate Senſe of thoſe words; *He is dead:* Who is dead? He. The He or Perſon muſt remain. What is dead? Such a thing. A Man. The thing or Man is, tho' dead. A Man is a Compound of Soul and Body: Or a Mind doing and ſuffering, with, or by occaſion of an Organical Body. A Man's being dead is the Ceſſation of this manner of Life, not of either of the Components, Beings, or Eſſential Properties. The Body unacted by the Mind, is uſeleſs among Men, and tends to Corruption, or Diſſolution of parts; ſo the Living, put it out of their ſight: the Soul or Mind is inviſible of its ſelf, and can neither converſe with Men, nor Men with it, without the uſe of Body; ſo when ſeparate, it is not to Men; yet it no way follows but that it may well be to God, and to it ſelf, which is Being enough. But the Soul conſider'd apart, can have no Diſſolution of parts, having none to be ſeparated, nor can it die otherwiſe than in a figurative, or Metaphorical Senſe. As it may be ſaid to be morally dead, or dead in Sin, when it is impenitent, and not conformable to its Duty. To be Spiritually dead, when it thinks not of, or is not buſied about Spiritual things: To be dead to Sin, or dead to this World, when its diſorderly Thoughts, or undue Manners of Thinking on earthly, vile, ſordid things ceaſe: It may be ſaid to be dead to Joy or Comfort, when it has loſt all pleaſant Thoughts, and has only grievous, horrid, anxious ones, without all hope, or reſt continually; and if ſuch a State always continue, whether the Soul be ſeparate from, or joyned to a Body,

it is that which is properly call'd everlasting Death. Thus, I think, it is apparent that the Soul is immortal, and that which is its proper or natural Life, *viz.* Thinking, does not cease.

Tho' to suppose the Soul immortal of its own Nature, or that it is, or has any thing in it self, which necessarily infers its Continuance, would be as great or a greater Error than to fancy it mortal; for that would be to suppose it immortal, as its Author is. But it cannot be suppos'd thus to be immortal; for whatsoever had a Beginning, or had not Being always, may be supposed to have an End, and cease to be. Such are all Creatures, who would fall into nothing, if God should not will their Continuance. But that he does will them to continue, I think we may be perswaded by the foregoing Considerations.

32. Moreover, we have not only reason to believe that Souls do continue tho' separate from, that is disusing their Bodies, and such a Life they lived with them; but that they shall have their Bodies again after some time; because the end of the Souls having a Body, cannot easily be thought to be fully attained in this Life. This material World seems to be made chiefly for Man to be concern'd with, and the things therein to be Objects of his Knowledge, and Subjects of his Actions. It is by means of his Body that he is now capable of knowing and acting in Bodily Nature; but what he knows and does therein, is so imperfect, notwithstanding all the Wonders that have come within the reach of his Understanding, and great things have been effected by his hand, that we believe God will not let him loose his Body, or cut the bond of Corporal and Spiritual Nature for ever; but rather give it him again, and that so alter'd as where-with he may be more capable of all those things he ought to do,

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and be in Bodily Nature. The Creatures, inferiour to Man, and ſubject to his Knowledge and uſe, are but very little known, or duly uſed in this Life; therefore it is probable they will in another: and without a Body we cannot ſee that the material World can ſignifie any thing to the Mind of Man. Man at his Ἀνάλυσις, or Diſſolution, probably ceaſes to be to the Bodily World, and the Bodily World to him; but in his Ἀνάστασις, Reſurrection, ſtanding up, or uſing a Body again, he is again united to Bodily Nature, to do, and be ſomething again therein. And that he may be more capable of what he ſhould be and do, than he was in his firſt State, or of finding the great Unreaſonableneſs and Unhappineſs of perſiſting in the contrary to his Duty, it is requiſite that the Body he receives ſhould be altered, or not exactly the ſame, but otherwiſe modified; ſo as to be capable of the ſtate the Soul is then determined to. And if we have reaſon to believe the Body ſhall be changed, we cannot well think it ſhall be exactly the ſame numerical and like figured Parts of Matter it had before; ſuch a Suppoſition is needleſs as well as groundleſs, if not contradictory. The Body a Man of Forty or Fifty has, is not the ſame numerical Matter he had at his Birth, but has received the greateſt part of its bulk from the various matters of his Food; ſo that he was truly eating from his Trencher, what is his Body. But every Soul hath its own Body, tho' the Body now be in continual change. The Matter of the Bodies of Men and Brutes, in the long tract of the Ages of this World, hath been confounded; and the ſame Matter, or part of it, that was the Body of one at one time, has become the Body, or part of the Body of another, at another time; but that needs not trouble us, when the Sameneſs of a Perſon does not conſiſt in the Sameneſs of the Matter of his Body, but in

the Continuation of his Thinking, and Conſcience of his Thoughts. Nor perhaps have we any ground to ſuppoſe the raiſed Body will be altogether unchangeable; it will be enough if to the happy, it be ſuch as will never any way hinder their Happineſs; to the wicked ſuch as will continue, tho' in the want of all the diſorderly beloved Gratifications of Senſe. To believe the Poſſibility of a Soul's having a Raiſed or Refitted Body, either from the common Matter of the Earth, or partly from thoſe very Particles it formerly had, is no difficulty, when the Will of God is ſuppoſed the Cauſe: Nor need we perſwade the Poſſibility of a Recollection of diſperſed Matter, or tell you that even the Art of Man can gather together that which ſeems to be ſeparated as much as a rotten Corps. There is no manner of Difficulty or Contradiction in believing the Reſurrection to thoſe that believe a God. The Difficulties that ſome have pretended in the notion of the Numerical Sameneſs of every Particle of Matter, are nothing, when we are no way obliged to believe it ſuch a Reſurrection.

33. Moreover, as all things in this ſinful Life are very much out of order, and Men do not ſufficiently ſee their Diſorders, but think well of that which is ill, and ill of that which is well: It is very requiſite, and becoming the Perfections of God, beſeeming his Juſtice and Truth, or his Approbation of his Will to Man, and of his Conſtancy, with the Manifeſtation of the true Cauſes of all Good and Evil; that there ſhould be ſome time or other after this Life, for a time of Diſcovering, Determination, Judgment, or Declaration of the Truth of things. That the Work of Repentance and Obedience may be approved, and appear to be good, and moſt profitable for the Creature; and Diſobedience and Impenitence may be no more miſtaken by Sinners for

the way of Goodneſs and Happineſs: That Juſtice and Injuſtice may no more be taken one for the other; that the Good may appear to be delivered from the power of the Wicked, and the Wicked appear to be the Fools that were deceived: And that the Truth of things may be moſt manifeſt, and the Determination of them clear even to wicked Men, it is not only highly probable, but neceſſary that Men ſhall appear again in ſuch Bodies, as whereby they may be known to one another; and theſe things be effected by ſuch a means, and in ſuch a manner, as may moſt aptly tend to the undoubted Determination of all things to their due, and laſting Condition.

34. Now as it is evident that Man's Buſineſs is to be conformable to the Will of his Maker, according to that order the Moſt Wiſe thinks fit, wherein his Perfections may be moſt ſeen, and whereby the Creature may be moſt happy or pleas'd; and ſince it is as evident that Man has failed, and gone out of this order, and vainly ſought out himſelf an impoſſible way of Happineſs, wherein his Maker cannot be duly ſeen: It follows that Man ought to repent, and change his Mind. To the doing of which, it is neceſſary that Man ſhould be capable of ſo doing. It cannot be an immediate Obligation on a Creature to do what he cannot do. Tho' the Creature has diſobey'd, yet the Obligation to future Obedience ſtill remains, ſo conſequently a Capacity of obeying. It would be very hard to be required to give what one has not, and cannot have. The Difficulty that may ſeem in ſeveral Inſtances wherein a Man may in ſome ſort render himſelf uncapable of what he ought to do, may be ſolved by this Conſideration: That Man cannot be thought to be diſabled of a Will, or Faculty of Deſire: While he has a Being he always wills, or deſires ſomething, and his

his Will is changeable by the ſtrength of Argument, or new appearance of Good from one thing to another. There are the greateſt Arguments on the ſide of Duty, which may poſſibly appear to the Man, whereby his Will may be changed; and the willing according to God's Will, is the act of Obedience, which God accepts where the Soul cannot effect the outward things, which are to Men the Teſtimonies, Signs, and Effects of it: And ſuch hearty Deſires continued, God often aſſiſts to be ſhewn forth, and have their Effects to others; or by his Providence ſome way or other rectifies the matter.

As for inſtance; If a Man borrows Money, ſpends it, and then can't pay it, he repents that he has done amiſs, deſires and endeavours to get Money to pay, but can't; God forgives his Sin wherein he willed amiſs, accepts of his Will to pay, for the deed, ſupplies his Creditor another way, or incites him to forgive him: If he forgives him, the Debter is no longer obliged to pay the Debt, or a Debter in that matter; if the Creditor will not forgive the poor Man that would, and cannot pay, he looſeth the Condition of Forgiveneſs with God, who will not require what the Creature cannot do. God has not been wanting to the Creature; he firſt made him innocent, and capable of continuing ſo, as well as of ſinning; and he has made him capable of repenting, and becoming obedient and happy, tho' he has ſinn'd: He has given him a Faculty of conſidering, and reaſoning with himſelf, whereby, as aforeſaid, he may be, and is, whenever he is convinced. Now if Man notwithſtanding he hath ſinn'd, ſhall repent, and become (as he ſhould be) obedient, he will alſo become happy, and the end of his Being will be attain'd what-ever means God may pleaſe to make effectual to this end.

35. And

35. And that God has given divers means tending to this end ever ſince Man hath ſinned, is plainly ſeen. Every Man hath a Conſcience, a kind of Court of Judgment in himſelf, accuſing more or leſs, as he hath ſeen his Actions to have been more or leſs diſorderly, and telling him he ought to do otherwiſe. Beſides, the experience of the Diſquiet, or Unhappineſs every Man has as the fruits of his own, and other Mens Sins, a little conſideration will make an Argument to perſwade him to repent, or do no more ſuch things as make him ſo uneaſie. The due Conſideration of God and himſelf will certainly give every Man an Argument enough to perſwade him to behave himſelf according to God's Will, even for his own profit. But beſides this Natural Light of Conviction, and theſe Motives in ſelf to Repentance, which are or may be always preſent with a Man, it cannot be thought unbecoming the Goodneſs and Power of God ſometimes himſelf to make more ſtrong Impreſſions on the Mind of Man, or immediately to cauſe him to have ſuch or ſuch more ſerious, and right Thoughts. He that made us Thinkers, may if he pleaſe inject particular Thoughts into our Minds without any Medium; yet it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that he may, and does often employ the Good Spirits in ſuch Errants, to inſtigate Men to Good, as he ſuffers the Evil ones to tempt to Wickedneſs. The Exiſtence of both which ſort of Spirits any one may eaſily be perſwaded to believe from the conſideration of his own Mind, as a Spirit capable of ſubſiſting without a Body, either obedient or diſobedient. But to diſtinguiſh theſe Thoughts which come into our Minds by the ſilent Language of Spirits, (if I may uſe ſuch an Expreſſion) may not be ſo eaſie: The Good Thoughts are eaſily known from the Bad; the bad muſt be our own, or from Evil Spirits; but commonly thoſe that come thus by way

way of Injection, are ſtrong and ſuddain. But to diſtinguiſh the Injections from Good Spirits, and thoſe from God himſelf, ſeems more difficult. Some will not be pleas'd with theſe Conſiderations; but thoſe that attend ſeriouſly and judiciouſly to what paſſes in their own Minds, may eaſily find ſomething of theſe things. But to leave this Digreſſion: God has made Man capable of, and given him yet more External Motives to Repentance, for the rectifying his Diſorders; as the beholding the Actions of others, in whom the Diſorders are more eaſily ſeen. The fond Love of Self may ſometime make my own Action ſeem well to me, but an Action in another is judged more impartially; but then from the Judgment I make of another I may reflect back again to my ſelf, and ſay: If a thing ſeem uncomely, and ill in another, I may eaſily conclude the Action is alike ill in me. For inſtance; I preſently ſee the Injuſtice of another, doing any thing that abates my Happineſs, or takes away any Good from me, or confers to my Miſery; thence I cannot but conclude there is the ſame Unreaſonableneſs in my hurting him or another. But there is yet a more extrinſick way of Conviction, and leading to Repentance; and that is the expreſs Admonitions, and Perſwaſions of thoſe who have repented, and do repent. If I have ſeen the Evil of diſagreeing with my Maker, the Unhappineſs and farther Tendency to Miſery of Sin, and have left it; if I have ſeen the Reaſonableneſs of loving and obeying God, and conſequently do it; I ſhall alſo be deſirous that my Fellow Sinner ſhould come to his right Mind. What meaſure of Love to God I have, or ſee I ought to have, I ſhall deſire in another. The Love of God infallibly influences me not only for God's ſake, but even for the Creatures ſake, to love my Fellow Creature, and endeavour to perſwade him to Repentance,

pentance, Obedience, and Happineſs. Such repenting Sinners have there been in all ages, (tho' ſometimes but a few) perſwading others, and one another to Repentance; and ſuch repenting Sinners God may expreſly command to preach Repentance and Obedience to others. But yet in all theſe (tho' by them many have been perſwaded) there is ſtill wanting ſomething of the height of external Argument. Theſe repenting Sinners have been Sinners ſometime, and in ſome meaſure Sinners ſtill, and may poſſibly err, as well as my ſelf, and be partial in their Admonitions and Councels, and ſpeak more or leſs than God's Will; and above all may ſometimes give Examples not agreeing with their Precepts, or may change, and ſay, and be one thing now another thing anon, as the ballance of Good and Evil goes up and down with them. Therefore if God will give the greateſt, and moſt ſuitable means to perſwade Sinners, as it is agreeable to his Wiſdom and Goodneſs to do, there ought to be ſome Infallible Inſtructer in the Will of God, confirm'd to be ſuch beyond all exception, giving an Example (with his Inſtructions) of perfect Obedience to his Maker; a Creature perſwading both by Perfection of Precepts, and Exactneſs of Example, to the perfect way of Obedience: One that hath no falſe byas for which he may be queſtion'd to be defective of being a perfect Rule to the reſt of the Creatures, but is capable and ſufficient to give the moſt convincing Arguments to enforce Repentance and Obedience. That God has given ſuch a means to reduce Man's diſorderly Will, we ſhall conſider by and by, when the thread of our Diſcourſe brings us to ſpeak of Revelation, and the Perfection and Subſtance of all Revelation.

Divers

Divers repenting Sinners God has expreſly commanded, and ſent to the reſt of Mankind to manifeſt his Will and Pleaſure by them, and to aſſure them that they will therein find their own Intereſt and Advantage.

36. And this Conſideration brings me at length to the buſineſs of Expreſs Revelation, which when conſidered in the Sum and Subſtance, Deſign and End of it, will be found to dictate, and enforce no other thing to Men than what we call Natural Religion, of which we have been ſomewhat diſcourſing. It is but as it were a more fair Edition of the ſame Law, a more particular and expreſs, more clear and convincing Manifeſtation of God's Will, a ſecond Witneſs of the ſame Truths, confirming what is teſtified by the natural Light of Reaſon: which alone were enough to leave all without excuſe who do not hearken to its Dictates, and ſufficient to lead all to the way of Obedience were it hearkened unto. But Revelation being added, dictating and enforcing in a manner plain, and clear enough for any Capacity, whatever is abſolutely neceſſary for Man to believe, and do in order to Happineſs; is enough to inform, and convince any of their Duty that do not ſtrongly reſiſt. For the clearing of which matter, let us take theſe Conſiderations.

As God is the Fountain and Cauſe of all Truths, ſo he is the Giver or Diſcoverer of all Truths that come within the reach of Created Underſtandings. But he doth not make known things to his Creatures always the ſame way. He hath given us Senſe and Reaſon; by which, with his general and common Aſſiſtance, we moſt commonly come to know things for ſome time unknown to us. But whenſoever it pleaſeth God to diſcover ſome Truth in an expreſs, particular, or extraordinary manner, then there is that which we call Divine Revelation, Now this

this Revelation may be considered two ways: In relation to the thing made known: And in relation to the Manner, or Measure of the Manifestation. But before we come to consider it these ways, let it be noted, that as we have said Revelation is some Truth discover'd, or made known to the Creatures; so we at the same time must necessarily suppose it a Truth knowable to the created Understanding. For to suppose a thing that is above our Understanding to be revealed to us, is to suppose a Revelation, and yet no Revelation; whatever is made known to us we know, and what we know is not above our Knowledge. The Capacity of Man's Understanding we readily believe may be enlarged; so that he may hereafter know what at present he is not capable of; but till he is capable of knowing such or such a Truth, or at least seeing it knowable, it can be no Revelation to him. As for instance; None can pretend that the Doctrine of Transubstantiation is revealed, while it is that which is inconceivable. That all the Properties wherein the Nature and Essence of Bread consists should remain, and yet the Bread be changed into Flesh, is that which is unintelligible, and not a Revelation. Nor can they well say that tho' the manner how this unseen Change can be, is not revealed; yet that it is indeed changed into Flesh, (and yet more strange! the Flesh of Christ) is revealed: For how this Change can be conceived to be made, and that it can be conceived to be made, is the very same thing, or at least as unintelligible: Nay such a supposed Change is a Contradiction, and a Contradiction can with the least reason of all be suppos'd a Revelation. For Man is not only unable to know how it can be, but is able to know, yea clearly sees it is impossible to be. With as good a pretence might a Man say, that tho' to any Man's Understanding, two and one make three,

yet

yet God has revealed to him that in God's Underſtanding, two and one is but one, or is nine, or what you pleaſe.

But as to Divine Revelation, it may be (as I ſaid) conſidered either as to the Thing revealed, or the Manner of the Revelation. As to the Thing revealed, it may be either that which is, or can be known no other way, *viz.* a Truth God has reſerved to ſuch his Peculiar Teaching, or that which might be known without Revelation; but not ſo clearly, eaſily, or ſoon, and in both it may be of a Truth paſt, preſent, or to come. As to the Manner of Revelation, a Truth may be communicated either immediately to the Underſtanding, ſuppoſing only that it is God's ſpecial Will that I, or he thus immediately know ſuch or ſuch a Truth we knew not before; or yet to the Underſtanding mediately by the Miniſtry of ſome ſuperiour Intelligent Creature that God firſt made know the thing; or yet ſtill more mediately a Truth may be made known in way of Revelation, even by our very Senſes; by means of ſome Bodily Object, as a Voice, Viſion, or the like. Again, as to the Manner of Revelation, it may be more general or particular, more partial or full; or in other words, fewer or more Truths may be thus made known at the ſame time. Now that God can, and may in a particular and expreſs manner make a Truth known to his Creature, or to one and another, and yet not to the third, or to every one; that he may give a Revelation to ſome immediately, and command them to tell it others; none but thoſe that disbelieve the Power Goodneſs, and Sovereignty of God, can deny. It cannot rationally be ſuppos'd but that the Author of Truths, can make a Truth known. He who has made Creatures ſenſible, and capable of Reaſoning, and finding out Truths by way of Induction and Argument, may if he

he pleaſe ſometimes give Men the Knowledge of ſome Truths, a nearer and eaſier way, or cauſe them to underſtand Truths not knowable by Senſe and Reaſon alone; and this immediately to whom he pleaſeth, and to others by them. Creatures that can come to the Knowledge of many things by their own Induſtry, or Application of Thought, may either know the ſame things, or things they would never have found out ſo, by a ſpecial Inſtruction. As a Man unaſſiſted by a Maſter may find out many things in Arts, but by the Inſtruction of a skilful Artiſt he may come to know the ſame and more, and in far leſs time than he could have known without ſuch a Teacher. Now it cannot be thought unbecoming the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, or unſuitable, or unneceſſary for the preſent Condition of Mankind, if we conſider it, that God ſhould have had ſome ſpecial Scholars of his own particular inſtructing, and have commanded them to teach other Men in things moſt profitable and neceſſary to them; or that he ſhould have ſent ſome particular Meſſengers to the reſt of Mankind to teach his Will to thoſe that through their own Negligence, or others Hinderance knew it not, or to teach it more clearly and fully to thoſe that knew it but in part, and to urge it upon all that were negligent to do it. That God may do thus, I think is now undoubted: That he has done ſo, ſeems to me the only thing needs farther to be proved to any rational Man. And that we may rationally be perſwaded that God has thus inſtructed, or ſent ſome particular Men, either to teach others, or urge them to do their known Duty, let us take theſe Conſiderations.

It is moſt evident to all thoſe who have took notice of the Actions of Mankind, conveighed by the moſt unqueſtionable Tradition from Generation to Generation, that now and then in the Ages of this

World there have been ſome Men teaching and perſwading others things, which when duly conſidered will be found Truths tending to their Good; and ſome of theſe have declar'd themſelves ſent of God, and commanded to teach, and perſwade the things they have taught and perſwaded. Now ſuppoſe ſome of them have not had the things they taught in this Special Manner immediately from God, yet they are Revelations to thoſe to whom they were before unknown, tho' not properly Divine Ones, as to the manner of their Diſcovery. But yet if the Perſons were really ſent by God's expreſs and ſpecial Command, to teach Men even what they might have found out themſelves, nevertheleſs that ſuch a Perſon was thus ſent of God, is a Divine Revelation, and a high Argument to perſwade Compliance with the things taught. But if they have received the Truths from God in this extraordinary, ſpecial, and particular Manner; and been expreſly ſent, and commanded to teach, and enforce them, there is all that can be deſired to a Divine Revelation. We have two things here principally to be ſatisfied in.

Firſt, Whether the Perſon teaching Men, was thus particularly taught of God?

Secondly, Whether he was expreſly commanded of God to teach, either this his expreſly received Divine Doctrine, or what he otherwiſe knew?

That the things are of God, we cannot doubt if they appear when declar'd, with Evidence and Demonſtration, God being the Author and Fountain of all Truths. That the things are Revelations, we cannot doubt if they are ſuch as were not knowable, or could not then be known any other way. As for inſtance; If the Perſon tells us, or brings to remembrance, ſome things paſt and forgotten, that were never committed either to written or unwritten Tradition; or if he gives us the Knowledge of

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things present, done at a distance, which he could not know any ordinary way, or such things to come which can be fore-known to none but God, (who is incomprehensible in Knowledge) and to whom he is pleas'd to reveal them.

That the Person was sent of God, we may be perswaded, partly by the things he declares appearing thus to be Revelations, partly by their being such as were good, very necessary, and beneficial to be known, or done by the Persons to whom he declares himself sent: But fully and sufficiently, if some extraordinary Effect is also produced by means of the Person, such as never is done, or at least could be done by him without the special and uncommon Operation of the Divine Power, or the Finger of God; such as we call a Miracle. When such Effects accompany Persons asserting themselves sent of God to teach and exhort Men things in themselves, shewing no Repugnancy to Truth, there can be no more rational Doubt of them, or of the Authority, and Divine Mission of the Persons. God cannot be suppos'd to alter the common order of things in his Creatures, in Concurrence to perswade a Lye, or to give his Special Testimony to any Deceiver. But yet here we had need use our Reason, and have some skill to judge of, and distinguish a True Miracle from a False one, that we may be certain of the Matter of Fact: For there have perhaps been more Pretences to Miracles, or False and Lying Wonders, than True ones. Now that I may a little help those who have not so well consider'd this Matter, I shall lay down a few more Considerations of the nature of a Miracle, before I come to consider how these things may be apply'd particularly to the Book commonly call'd the Holy Scripture. A Miracle, negatively, is not a Contradiction in nature, or any thing that implyeth a Contradiction, Absurdity, or

abſolute Impoſſibility; as that a thing ſhould be made to be and not to be, ſo and ſo, and not ſo and ſo at the ſame time: That which the Underſtanding of Man can no ways apprehend, but as abſurd or impoſſible, can neither be pretended as a Miracle, nor could it ſo be, would it ever have the end of a Miracle. As for inſtance; That a certain Saint beheaded, ſhould afterwards carry his Head in his Mouth for ſome miles; or that the Body of Chriſt ſhould be in divers places at the ſame time: Nor can the Almighty Power of God be any pretence for the Belief of ſuch Abſurdies; for Things or Truths are the Products and Subjects of Divine Power, and not Contradictions. Again; A Miracle is not a Fallacy or Deception of Mens Senſes, or Underſtanding; for a Deceit hath the nature of a Lye, and is not likely to come from the God of Truth. Nor is a Miracle a thing done by the Power or Art of the Man, howſoever great or ſtrange, any Man's Power or Art may be to others that are weak or ignorant. Nor is a Miracle any more in the Will of Man, than in his Power or Skill; the Time or Subject for a Miracle is not determin'd by Man's vain Will to ſatisfie Curioſity, or unneceſſary Deſires, but is generally wrought upon ſerious and weighty Occaſions; nor is God's Will ſo properly ſaid to concur with Man's Will, when Man would work a Miracle, as Man's Will to concur with God's Will when God pleaſes, and ſees fit to work one. But a Miracle is an extraordinary Effect, or Alteration in Nature, wrought by the Will of God, above the Power and Art of Man, at leaſt of him who is the Inſtrument of effecting it, in the way it was effected: A thing done by the Special and Uncommon Operation of the Divine Power. The end of a Miracle is the Confirmation of ſome Revelation or Truth as from God, to promote ſome conſidera-

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ble Good; no leſs than to perſwade Sinners to repent, or will as God wills, or to confirm them that ſo do, in their well-willing. And where-ever there is ſaid to be a Miracle that tends not to this end, it ought to be ſuſpected, and will be found upon ſerious Examination to be but a Pretence, and no real Miracle. But now to come a little nearer to Matters of Fact, that we may be perſwaded that there have indeed been Divine Revelations, and ſome Perſons ſent to declare the Will of God to others, and the Truth of their Miſſion, and of the things declared, confirm'd by Miracles, we need no more but ſeriouſly read and conſider the Books of *Moſes* and the Prophets, and eſpecially the Writings of the Apoſtles and Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. In the Reading and Conſideration of which Books, if theſe two things appear, I think there is enough to ſatisfie any rational Man in this matter.

Firſt, That the things related, as taught, perſwaded and done, agree with the moſt rational and crittical Account of Divine Revelations and Miracles.

Secondly, That the Hiſtory it ſelf be undoubtedly true.

Let us conſider both theſe as briefly as we can. In the firſt place there is to be conſidered in the Scripture, the Doctrinal or Inſtructive Part, which teacheth for a foundation: That there is one Moſt high Sufficient Being, or God: And that he is the Author and Continuer, and conſequently Sovereign Lord of all other Beings: That at his Word the Heavens, and the Earth, and all things in them, were made, and are upheld. That he is Good, Wiſe, Juſt, True, Benign, or Merciful, *&c.* Beſides this Inſtruction what God is, it teacheth us what we are, *viz.* Sinful wretched Fallen Creatures, that can have no Good or Happineſs in our

ſelves: It informs us how we ſhould behave our ſelves towards God, *viz.* as Dependent things, and that we ſhould love him, obey him, fear to do any thing contrary to his Will, truſt him, or believe him, *&c.* and how we ſhould carry it to one another, *viz.* to do as we would be done by; that is, every one to confer as he is capable towards another's Happineſs. Having propos'd things to the Underſtanding. Secondly, It addeth the Perſwaſive Part to the Will, moving us to behave our ſelves ſuitably in the Actings of our Wills to ſuch Truths known, by ſetting before us Good or Evil, Profit or Diſprofit, Pleaſure or Diſpleaſure, Seemlineſs or Unſeemlineſs; accompanying, or conſequent on our orderly, or diſorderly Behaviour. Now theſe things propos'd and urged in theſe Books, as the main Scope and Deſign of them, appear to be of God, as they come with evidence of Truth and Goodneſs; ſuch as are agreeable to the Reaſon of a conſiderate Man, and are ſeen proper and convenient for the Creatures Will to comply with, things beſeeming the all-perfect Being to teach and command; convenient and profitable for the Creature to learn and obey. Which if we conſider with our ſelves, and compare with what has been ſaid in the former part of this Book, will appear to be the very ſame Principles and Practice of that we call Natural or Rational Religion, which is knowable by the Light of Nature to all Mankind. But that theſe ſame things may, and how far they may, be call'd Revelations, will appear by conſidering the Times and Circumſtances, and Manners of their Delivery. Thus if when Men had given up themſelves chiefly to the Conſideration of ſenſual Objects, and bent their Wills to the diſorderly Satisfaction of their Bodily Appetites; neglected the due Conſideration of their Author, and the End of their Being: Began to fan-

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cy God too much like themſelves: Had low, mean, groſs Conceptions of him, and too high Conceits of Creatures: Confounded the Properties of God with thoſe of his Works: Gave Divine Honour to Men, or any thing they fancied excellent or uſeful: Made Bodily Repreſentations of God; and as ſome repreſented him by one thing, ſome by another, their various and diſagreeing Images could not be reconciled, ſo as to be taken all ſo different, for Images of one and the ſame Being; but they began to fancy as many Gods as their differing Conceits had made Images: So that Divine Nature was miſtaken even as to number, uncertain without end: And even thoſe who by long Inſtructions had been brought again to the Belief and Worſhip of but One God, had ſo far miſtaken his Will as to fancy their good Behaviour to him conſiſted in external Ceremonies; ſuppoſing that he would be affected with the Slaying of Beaſts, and pleas'd with a Cuſtom of little Obſervances; as wearing of odd faſhion'd Garments, keeping of certain Days, uſing divers Geſtures, *&c.* when at the ſame time they neglected Juſtice, Judgment, Mercy, Truth, Goodneſs, *&c.* grew corrupt and unreaſonable in their Actions, even to one another, had brought themſelves into divers preſent Miſeries, and laid a foundation for future Unhappineſs to themſelves after this Life, and to their Poſterity; yea lived as if they believed there was no future Life. If then in ſuch times of Ignorance and Corruption God ſent, or particularly inſtructed, and ſent ſome one or more to the reſt, expreſly to teach the Truth, and command his Will; here was a Revelation, and a time for the Goodneſs of God to ſhew it ſelf in ſupplying the neceſſity of blind miſerable Sinners; when nothing could be more profitable for Man, or becoming God, than ſuch gracious Diſcoveries. But if theſe Men alſo

declar'd ſome things that could not be otherwiſe known to them than by Divine Inſpiration, as certain future Events: If there accompanied them a Supernatural Power, effecting things could no otherwiſe (at leaſt by them) be effected, here is enough to be call'd Divine Revelation, and Miracles. And there can no more Scruple remain, if we can but be perſwaded to believe that the Hiſtory of the Bible it ſelf is true, which is the Second thing to be conſidered. And in order to which, I think it not unneceſſary to lay down ſome general Conſiderations about Faith, as following.

Faith is an Aſſent to a thing as a Truth, on the Word of another, which we our ſelves don't know, or ſee; according to that compleat Diffinition thereof, *Heb.* 11. 1. πραγματων ἔλεγχος ἀ βλεπομένων, *the evidence of things not ſeen*, or known; for Knowledge leaves no room for Faith, any more than it does for Hope, which is the Deſire of what we only believe will be; Faith being its only Baſis, πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑποστασις, *Faith is the foundation or ground of things hoped for*; for where we have no Faith of the real Futurity of a thing, there Hope has no ground. But Faith if it hath its due Circumſtances, it is ἔλεγχος, a Convictive Argument. And tho' Faith and Knowledge are ſo different that we can no longer properly ſay we believe a thing, when once we can ſay we know it, yet Faith (if right) is as near to Knowledge, as that which is not Knowledge can be, and far from that doubtful Suppoſition call'd Opinion. That which is to be believed, or aſſented to as a Truth on anothers Word, is either, Firſt, an Aſſertion or Affirmation that ſuch or ſuch a thing was, is, or will be: Or, Secondly, a Promiſe when the Perſon on whoſe Word we rely for the real Futurity of the thing, makes us expect it from him as the Cauſe. Now that Faith may be as it ought, an Aſſent indeed to a Truth, tho' we don't know it,

and

and not the believing a Lye, these things we ought to be certain in. First, that the Person that hath asserted, or promised the thing we are to take for a Truth, could know it, or were not lyable himself to be deceived; or can or will be able to do it, it being in his power: Secondly, that he be Trusty, or one that will not deceive us. As to the Knowledge and Power of the Person, that we may be sure he could, or might know the thing, or can or will be able to do it: we must see that the thing is in it self knowable, or that it may possibly be a Truth; for that which I see absurd, contradictory, or absolutely impossible to be suppos'd, I can never well believe on any one's Word, nor could I do so, would it be of any use to me. Whatever I am to believe, must at least seem possible to be a Truth; for nothing else can challenge my Faith, or be ἱκανὸν, a sufficient Argument. So whatever I am perswaded to do, must at least seem a Good. As Truth alone is the Object of Knowledge, so should it be of Faith. Nothing can well be believed but what may come to be known. Secondly, I must see that the thing be not only knowable and possible in it self, but also knowable or possible to the Person on whose Word I believe it. Which I may do by considering well the Person, and his Circumstances. As to the Trust of the Person whose Word I assent to, I may be satisfied that he would not deceive me; if, First, I see he could propose no (at least seeming) good end in so doing: Or, Secondly, if I see he could not suppose it possible to attain his end, if it were to deceive me. For no one proposes to themselves the doing any thing, but for some (at least seeming) good end, much less the doing what they see they cannot be able to effect. Faith without these Circumstances would be groundless, uncertain, and as lyable to be the Belief of a Lye as

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of a Truth, and to no good purpoſe at all. But in giving our Aſſent to the Word even of Man, if thus circumſtanced, we need fear no Deception. Now as the crediting Man's Word may be call'd a Natural Faith, ſo an Aſſent to the Word of God is that which is properly ſaid to be a Divine Faith. But the Word of Man thus differs from the Word of God; That tho' divers Men may concur in ſaying one and the ſame thing, (and ought ſo to do in ſome caſes that Man's Word may rationally demand our Belief) and God being but one, can be but a ſingle Witneſs; yet God's Word is greater, and ſurer than Man's: Becauſe God cannot ſo much as be ſuppos'd to be deceived, being Omniſcient; or be thought unable to perform his Promiſe, being Almighty; nor can he be ſuppos'd to will to deceive us, who is the ſelf-ſufficient Fountain of Good; nor therefore can he propoſe the getting of any Good to himſelf by deceiving his Creatures, Abſolute Perfection being uncapable of advantage. Man may poſſibly be deceived, knowing but a little, or will to deceive, wanting Goodneſs, or propoſe an advantage to himſelf being needy; and that by deceiving, as he may want power to get his end another way. He may ſuppoſe himſelf able, when he is not; and ſo not perform his Promiſe, tho' he would; or his Will may change, not knowing always what is beſt, and ſo not will to do at one time, what at another he made us expect from him. Wherefore we cannot believe, or aſſent to as true, what Man ſaith, merely becauſe he ſaith it, but on theſe divers requiſite Conſiderations.

There can be but one thing neceſſary, or pre-requiſite, towards our believing God's Word, and that is, That we be ſure that what we credit as God's Word, is indeed his Word, or that he does indeed ſay what he is ſuppos'd ſo to do. Whether This, or

That,

That, is truely the Word of God, we may determine by conſidering what is before ſaid of Revelation and Miracles; with the Matter, the Manner, the End, &c. of the thing ſaid.

But now as to the buſineſs under Conſideration; What has been ſaid may be eaſily apply'd to the Scripture, and here particularly to the Hiſtorical Parts thereof, without any farther help; and as they appear, by thus regularly conſidering them, ſo let them be eſteem'd. But I ſhall name for example the chief of them, and that briefly; in which Books, (as I have before hinted) is obſervable a Drift or Deſign all along againſt Wickedneſs and Deceit, a Recommendation and Encouragement of Goodneſs, Truth, and all Vertue; which can hardly be thought ſo to concur in ſo many Writers writing at ſuch different times, could they be thought to agree in a deſign to deceive Mankind, or to propoſe any ſeeming Good End in ſo doing. Firſt, The Books of *Moſes*, containing a Narrative of ſuch things as could not be done without the Knowledge of a conſiderable part of Mankind, cannot be ſuppos'd to be mere Fictions: The things which he writes (or whoever writes them) as his own Knowledge, he could not eaſily be deceived in, nor can he be thought to have ſeen any poſſibility of deceiving Mankind ſo groſly, as he muſt be ſaid to have done if his Writings be no true Hiſtory, it being ſo eaſie a matter for the then preſent, or immediately ſucceeding Ages, to detect the Fallacy; but they have not ſo done, but concurr'd with him to deliver them down to Poſterity. A Hiſtory of famous and publick Actions for ſo many years, if no ſuch things were done, could never be ſuppos'd to gain Belief as a True Hiſtory, and be ſo generally receiv'd, and deliver'd down for Truth from Age to Age, as theſe Books have been. Nor could the De-

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ſign he ſeems to aim at, *viz.* The inſtructing the Iſraelites in the Knowledge and Service of the One True God, with the promoting of all Vertue and Duty to Man, run ſo ſmoothly along with ſo apparently wicked and unprofitable a Deſign as the deceiving Poſterity with a Fiction inſtead of a true Story. As to the things done before his time, which he ſpeaks of but briefly in order to his deſign; they might poſſibly be made known to him by Revelation: tho', I confeſs, I ſee no ground for ſuch a Belief, or of what uſe it would be, much leſs of any neceſſity he ſhould ſo receive them (any more than the things he ſaw done) when he might receive them by either Oral, or written Tradition. But that *Moſes* was ſent of God to teach and inſtruct the Iſraelites, and whoſoever would learn of them, cannot be diſcredited if thoſe Miraculous things were done, which the whole Nation of the Hebrews, and many others, could not be deceived in: As the Wonders in *Egypt*; the Paſſage through the *Red Sea*; and eſpecially the giving the Law, *viz.* the Ten Words, expreſly by a Voice from Mount *Sinai*; which that numerous People could not eaſily concur to deliver down to Poſterity, to deceive their Children; witneſſing thoſe Laws to be in ſuch a manner given of God, tho' they were themſelves ſo inclinable to break them, if there had been no ſuch Laws ſo given. Nor are the other Prophets leſs to be credited in their Narratives; or whoever writes their Stories, or the Books under their Names: That ſuch and ſuch Men came in the Name of God delivering Inſtructions, Reproofs, Warnings, *&c.* to the People, could not be a Miſtake. Nor could they impoſe upon Men in thoſe Miracles they are ſometimes ſaid to do; much leſs in the Predictions of Future Events, even of particular Perſons by name. Telling the Councels of diſtant Enemies, and even what

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ſhould be the future Actions of ſome whoſe Hearts had not yet conceived the Thoughts of them; giving alſo the infallible Teſt to know a Falſe Prophet by, *viz.* if what he ſaith comes not to paſs. Which Predictions were ſuch as could be made by none without particular Divine Revelation; which when but deliver'd were accompanied with Circumſtances, making them at leaſt credible that they might be; but when fulfilled they were ſeen beyond diſpute to have been Revelations of God. The moſt principal, and full of which Old Teſtament Predictions related to Chriſt, and his Miniſtry, and were found exactly fulfilled in him; and conſequently to be of God. Which Conſideration brings me to the New Teſtament, or the Writings of the Apoſtles, and Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, the Maſter and Teacher of the Chriſtian Religion; which is the main thing I would perſwade him that already believes Natural Religion, not to be offended at.

The Doctrinal and Preceptive Part contain'd in theſe Books, I'm ſure none that conſiders it can in reaſon diſlike, it is ſo rational and natural: And tho' the whole Bible teaches in its Precepts principally Natural Religion, or Exact Morality; yet the Doctrine of Chriſt as deliver'd down to us by his Apoſtles and Diſciples, ſeems to out-ſhine whatever was taught before in Clearneſs, and alſo to out-do all former Manifeſtations in the Fulneſs thereof. What has he taught, or what has he commanded, but what is clearly evident, and ſtrongly reaſonable to any that without Prejudice will uſe their Reaſon, and conſider it? and what can be deſired to a moſt perfect Rule of Life, more than he hath given in his ſhort, yet comprehenſive Precepts? As to the Hiſtorical Part of the New Teſtament, I think I may boldly ſay, it hath in divers Reſpects the advantage of any other Hiſtory.

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As the Notableneſs of the Matters of Fact: The Number and Character of the Witneſſes: Their ſufficient Agreement and Harmony in their Teſtimony: The Time and Place of the things done: The Reception of this Hiſtory and Doctrine, by ſucceeding Ages: The Change wrought in the World thereby: The Succeſſion and Continuation of the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity. All which things cannot be ſuppos'd ſo to concur in oppoſition to the Carnal Intereſt, and ſinful Inclinations of the World, to give credit to a mere Romance, or feigned Story. He would be as unreaſonable that ſhould deny that there was ſuch a Perſon as Jeſus Chriſt, and that he taught ſo and ſo, and did ſuch and ſuch Miracles, with the Conſequences thereof; as he that ſhould deny that there was ſuch a Perſon as *Charles* the Firſt King of *England*, and that there was a Civil War between him and the Parliament. But I leave theſe things, having juſt named them, to the Conſideration of thinking Readers; who if they have any deſire to be more fully ſatisfied in theſe matters, may conſult ſeveral learned, and well known Authors, who have handled this matter largely. But I ſhall come to conſider as ſoon as I can, ſome particular things, at which the Naturaliſt ſeems more juſtly offended, relating to Jeſus Chriſt's Perſon or Office; that ſo if poſſible all things may be made clear, that the Deiſt at length may ſee Chriſtianity moſt rational, and no longer refuſe to embrace it. But,

37. Of Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall firſt lay down this Propoſition: That the greateſt, moſt adequate, and ſuitable Means God has given among Men towards their Recovery from Diſobedience, and the cleareſt Arguments he hath offered them to perſwade them to will as he wills, in order to their Happineſs, he hath given in, and by the Man Chriſt. Which I think will appear by the time we have a little conſider'd

ſider'd his Work, and his Perſon. And concerning the Work of Chriſt, (which I think moſt proper to ſpeak of firſt) I ſhall lay down this Propoſition.

That the Sum and Subſtance, End and Deſign of all Chriſt has done, does, or will do in relation to Fallen Man's Recovery, is to convince Man that he hath done Evil in willing contrary to God's Will, and to perſwade him to change his Mind, and will as God wills for the future, to the Manifeſtation of God's Perfections, and Man's Happineſs. The Ways and Methods Chriſt took to perform this Work, if we conſider, will appear very rational and ſuitable to the Nature of Man, and the End of his Being. Firſt, Man is to be fully inform'd of the Truth of things relating to his Diſobedience or Obedience, Unhappineſs or Happineſs. But Chriſt hath given the fulleſt Diſcovery of the Mind and Will of God, in relation to his Creatures: He hath given the moſt fair Edition, and Interpretation of God's Laws, rectifying the inveterate Miſtakes of Mankind: He hath diſcovered the falſe Gloſſes and Interpretations, ſinful Men had put upon the foregoing Revelations of God's Will; and reconciled Revelation to the Natural Light in ſuch a manner, that thoſe that heard him were forced to confeſs he ſpake as never Man ſpake before: And we who have but a ſhort account of what he ſaid, have yet enough to ſhew us that he was as it were the Oracle of Moral Wiſdom: Such an Excellency appears in his comprehenſive Account of the whole Law of God; Such an admirable Method in his Directory of the Order of our Deſires: To be ſhort, ſuch a Pre-eminence in all thoſe Sayings we have as coming from his own Mouth, that me-thinks an ordinary Conſiderer may ſee a Wiſdom diſtinguiſhable from that of all his Servants, tho' ſome of them at leaſt equall'd him in the Greatneſs of Miraculous Works. He

hath

hath both repreſented God far more clearly than he was before repreſented, what he is, and will be found to be to his Creatures; and his Creatures, what they ought to be to him, and one another. And particularly Goodneſs was never ſo unvailed, and made to ſhine forth before; the Goodneſs of God what it is, and will be; and the Goodneſs of Man what it muſt, or ſhould be. The Goodneſs of God was never before ſeen to be ſo much greater than the Sin of Man, as by this Meſſenger; who comes declaring God moſt ready to forgive, and communicate his Benefits to ſinful Men, as he would have done had they never ſinned, if they are but willing to be forgiven, and repent: That God wills not our Unhappineſs, as we are inclinable to will Evil to thoſe that croſs our Wills. He hath taught us to come to God as to a Father, expecting infinitely more Goodneſs, (beyond our meaſuring) than we can from our Natural Fathers. And that we ought to imitate him in Goodneſs, Love, Mercy, Forgiveneſs, even in that which ſome have counted a Paradox, *Loving our Enemies, bleſſing them that curſe us, and doing Good to thoſe that perſecute us, and deſpitefully uſe us.* The Men of old were apt to pray againſt, or curſe their Enemies; and Men now are too much of that Spirit, in whom the Love of God does not prevail; being ready to think it unreaſonable, or impoſſible to love their Enemies. But that it is both reaſonable, and more eaſie to love our very Enemies than to hate them, we may be perſwaded by divers Conſiderations. If it be an Excellency to be like God, the moſt perfect and happy Being, Chriſt tells us, that *he makes his Sun to ſhine upon the Good and the Bad, and is kind unto the unthankful, and the Evil*; he counſels us to imitate God: Who tho' Men be Enemies to him, does nothing to them but what may be an Argument to make them his

his Friends. Is Hatred an uneaſie Paſſion? Let us love all Men, and be at eaſe. Would we have Friends? Is it better to have many than few? Operative Love reconciles Enemies, and heaps Coals of Fire upon their Heads, not to burn them, but to melt them down into ſtreams of Love. We cannot well love our Enemies, as ſuch, with a Love of Complacency, but the working Love of Benevolence, if we are good, does as much as may be to make our Enemies ſuch as God, and we would have them; when Hatred does but increaſe, and continue Hatred. The Goodneſs of God leads us inimical Sinners to Repentance; and this God-like Behaviour in us is the greateſt means we can poſſibly uſe, and is often found effectual to turn the Arrows of Enmity againſt us, into Beams of Love. This reconciling Meſſage of Heaven, ſent by Jeſus Chriſt to rebellious Mortals, the Enemies of God and one another, is not without good reaſon call'd Ευαγγέλιον, the Good Speech; or Goſpel; teaching Love and Friendſhip, as the Soul of all Duty, and Eſſence of Happineſs. This Goſpel is not improperly alſo call'd the Better Teſtament, in compariſon with the Old Diſpenſation of Carnal and Troubleſome Ordinances, which God ſuffered the Hebrews, as well as other Nations, for a long time to labour under. This Goſpel Diſpenſation, if Men would live to the Purity of it, being moſt eaſie, reaſonable, and alike ſuitable to all Men; being but compleat, or very little more than Exact Morality, is that which would rectifie all the Diſorders of Mankind that can be amended in this Mortal State.

Secondly, As Chriſt taught the moſt plain and reaſonable Doctrine, ſo he gave the height of Argument to perſwade it; ſuch as could be moſt prevalent on Rational Creatures to gain their Compliance with the Mind and Will of their Maker. He has

not only convinceingly asserted, and proved himself sent of God, (a mighty Argument to procure the reception of his Message) by very many Miracles done by his Means, but manifested the things themselves delivered, to be God's Message by their Excellency, as most becoming God to dictate, and most fit for Man to receive. If the highest reason be enough to perswade the Will of Man, he hath given it. I challenge all, the most Zealous Jew, or Reasoning Deist, to shew me one thing that Christ hath indeed taught, or his Disciples at his Command, which cannot be most rationally accounted for, or where he hath imposed upon the Understanding of Man, or obliged him to believe, or profess any thing that is contradictory, or unintelligible, or commanded him to do any unreasonable thing, or what is against his real Interest. Let them shew me that Judaism, or Deism, is more reasonable; and he that can, may have great hopes of making me a Proselyte: till that is done, (which I am confident will never be) I am resolved to remain a Christian, or a Disciple of him who hath given the most fair Copy of Truth, relating to God, and his Will to Man, and relating to Mens present and future Condition: wherein I can see no difficulty to any that fairly reasons, and looks upon Christianity as it is in it self, and not as corrupted, and misrepresented by the Fancies and Traditions of Men in the Antichristian Defection.

Moreover, What Christ hath most clearly declared in way of Precept, he hath back'd and confirm'd by his Influencing Example, his Life being most exactly conformable to his Doctrine in entire Submission and Conformity to the Will of God, and constant perseverance therein, against the greatest Temptations Earth and Hell could offer; thereby asserting, by a Home Argument, that the doing the

the Will of God is eligible, yea beſt tho' we ſhould thereby looſe all the good things of this life we can looſe, with Life it ſelf, in the grounded hopes of a future State free from all the Evils of Temptation, Sin, and Unhappineſs. Which Future State he hath ſo plainly taught and manifeſted, that by him it may be well ſaid Life and Immortality was brought to light; the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future Life of Body and Soul together after a Reſurrection, being Truths left unto him clearly to teach.

38. That Chriſt might thus become a moſt fit Means or Mediator between God and ſinful Men, to bring them from Rebellion againſt God's Will, to Obedience to the Will of their Maker, it is to be conſidered what manner of Perſon Chriſt muſt be. And firſt it was neceſſary that he ſhould be a Man, that his Converſation with Men might be moſt near, familiar, and unqueſtionably real: *A Man like unto us in all things, Sin only excepted*; than which there cannot be conceived a more proper Medium between God and Sinners. Nothing can poſſibly be ſuppoſed between God, and the Creature. There can be no Third, or Middle Being, that is neither God, nor Creature to be a Mediator; and God cannot be a Mediator himſelf, becauſe he is one of the Extreams. Tho' God is the Firſt Cauſe, or Mover of Man to Repentance, he cannot be ſaid to be a Means, or Inſtrumental Cauſe; nor can there be any to uſe him, or ſend him, no nor can he be ſaid to ſend himſelf, or any one of his Attributes, or Properties. Nothing of God can in any proper ſenſe be ſaid to be abſent from God, and between God and Sinners. A King may declare his own Will, but he cannot be ſaid to ſend himſelf on an Embaſſy. A Sinner could not be a compleat Mediator; for Sinners are the other extream: Repenting Sinners may indeed be a ſort of Mediators between God and the

Impenitent; and have been ſo, as *Moſes* was and others, but they are incompleat ones; they were but the Servants ſent. If God would give a compleat Mediator, or Embaſſadour to the World of Sinners, he muſt give ſuch a one as his Son Chriſt was; who tho' he might, yea muſt be a Man like us in all things elſe; Sin muſt be excepted. If he were not a Man, truly; truly innocent; a Second *Adam*; he could not be an exact and perfect Example, nor a moſt unqueſtionable Witneſs, nor have ſhew'd that Man might have done his Duty. But he muſt be capable of being tempted to diſobey, or he could not have been an Example of reſiſting and obeying: None but he that might poſſibly diſobey, could yield free Obedience, ſuch as is worthy of God's Acceptance. God himſelf who is incapable of being tempted to Sin, or of Diſobedience, cannot be ſaid to obey, nor is there any above him to whom he can be obliged.

If Chriſt muſt be innocent, and perſiſting in Obedience, he muſt not be of the common race of Mankind; that is take both his Body and Soul mediately from ſinful Parents, as others do; but muſt as to his Soul, the Subject of Sin, or Obedience, be an Immediate Work of God, as the firſt Man was. Whatever comes immediately out of the hands of the Creator, cannot be thought to be other than pure; but out of an unclean thing, cometh that which is unclean. That Chriſt might be a Second Man in Innocence, he muſt not be begotten by the ſinful Will of Man, as other Men are; Conceptions of Self-Will, and Erring Underſtanding, ſo determin'd to Evil rather than to Good, that their at firſt weak Underſtanding, or Reaſon, is not ſufficient to counter-ballance the manifold Temptations by occaſions of Evil, within and without, Inſtructions and Examples to ſin, they meet with very early, from Parents

and

and others, whom they little ſuſpect ſuch Enemies to them; who uſe them to thoſe Actions, which tho' Ignorance makes innocent, Reaſon when they come to know what they do, makes culpable, and uſe determines to. But Chriſt beſides his pure Original, doubtleſs had the ſpecial Grace of God keeping him from Temptation ſo long as God ſaw fit, that he might have at leaſt the ſame advantage of ſtrength of Reaſon the Firſt Man had, who was to undergo far greater Temptations. But tho' he might not be a Soul derived from Man's corrupt Soul, yet his Body might well be taken from the Matter of Mankind, without his being thereby ſinful, or the more inclinable to ſin. For the Body is not the Subject of Sin, or that which infects the Soul; it may be an occaſion of Temptation to Sin, but Sin entirely reſides in the Mind, being but a diſorderly Act of the Will. That a Soul coming pure out of the hands of God, ſhould become a Sinner by uſing a Body taken from a Perſon that was a Sinner, is unreaſonable to be thought, while Matter has nothing in it but Quantity, Figure, and Motion, which howſoever diſpoſed or modified, has nothing of the Notion of Sin in it. We might as well ſuppoſe a Man muſt needs become a Thief, or a Murderer, if he dwell in a Houſe given him by one that was ſuch. Chriſt we all acknowledge received the Body, God prepar'd him, from the Virgin *Mary*, whom all ſuppoſe a Sinner, except ſome of the Roman Church; yet we ſuppoſe him not made a Sinner thereby. It was convenient Chriſt ſhould receive a Body from Mankind, that he might be a Real Man, and a near Kinſman, or Brother. A Rational Soul uſing an Organical Body ſuch as a Man's, is really a Man, tho' the Soul do not begin mediately by Generation, as much as if it did; otherwiſe the firſt Rational Creature uſing an Organical Body, would not have

been a Man the ſame in kind as others. The Firſt *Adam*'s Soul could come no way but by Inſpiration, and his Body was a more Immediate or Special Work of God, than the Bodies of others his Off-ſpring; therefore he is called the Son of God in a nearer reſpect than they. And that Chriſt's Soul was produced by the Immediate Power of God, and his Body by a Special Work of the Moſt High, he is the more properly ſaid to be the Second Man, or *Adam*; God forming a Seed in a Woman, a Virgin, [that we might be ſure he was not a common Man] when a Woman is naturally, or commonly, a Creature whoſe Seed is not in her ſelf originally, but in the Man; or perhaps to ſpeak more properly, that hath no Seed. This Seed of the Woman, inform'd with this Holy Soul; this One Exception from the common Order of the Production of Men, is therefore with good reaſon call'd the Son of God, eminently, as diſtinct from others; who on any leſſer, or more common Accounts are ſaid to be his Children. And the ſame reaſon for Subſiſtance we have given us in the Goſpel, *Luke* 1. 31. *The Angel ſaid unto* Mary, *thou ſhalt conceive in thy Womb, and bring forth a Son, and ſhalt call his name Jeſus:* Ver. 32. *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Moſt High, and the Lord God ſhall give him the Throne of* David, *his Father.* Chriſt is ſaid to be the *Son of* Abraham, *the Son of* David, only according to the Fleſh; becauſe *Mary*, from whom he received his Body materially, was of the Off-ſpring of *Abraham* and *David.* Ver. 34. *And* Mary *ſaid unto the Angel, how ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a Man?* V. 35. *And the Angel anſwering ſaid unto her, a Holy Spirit ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall ovsr-ſhadow thee; therefore alſo that holy Thing that ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God.* And to ſtrengthen the Virgin's Faith, he tells her, ver. 36. *Her Couſin* Elizabeth *who was*

was old, and accounted barren, had conceived: For, v. 37. *with God nothing ſhall be unpoſſible:* πᾶν ῥῆμα ἐκ ἀδυνατήσει, *every word ſhall not be unpoſſible, viz.* whatever can be ſaid in reaſon to be a thing to be done, ſhall not be unpoſſible with God. He brings her from the leſs to the greater; he that has cauſed the Old and Barren to be with Child, a thing above the power of Nature, can do more, even cauſe thee a Virgin to conceive without the means of a Man. Thus Chriſt, that ἅγιον, viz. πνεῦμα; that holy Soul, Spirit, or Mind, that received his Body from *Mary*, and ſo became the *Compoſitum* call'd a Man, was truely call'd the Son of the Moſt High, as God the Father of all was in a ſpecial manner his Efficient Cauſe; and the Son of *Mary*, and her Progenitors, as ſhe was the Material Cauſe of what was material in him. And leaſt any ſhould think the Holy Ghoſt the Efficient Cauſe of Chriſt's Conception, and ſo rather to be called his Father, (from whence would ariſe a great difficulty) from thoſe Expreſſions, *ver.* 35. πνεύμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπί σε; and *Math.* 1. 18, and 20. ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου; and ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου; let it be conſidered that the word πνεύμα, Spirit, is put without the Article, and is rather to be rendered a *Holy Spirit, and of a Holy Spirit*, then *the Holy Spirit: A Holy Spirit ſhall come upon thee, or into thee.* Signifying thereby, either that ſhe ſhould have a Holy Diſpoſition, in order to the over-ſhadowing Power of the Higheſt, *viz.* of the Father, coming to effect ſuch a Conception, or that ſhe ſhould receive a Holy Conception in her, or both. So *ſhe was found with Child of a Holy Spirit: That which is conceived in her, is of a Holy Spirit*; that is, ſhe hath a Holy Conception in her; was found with Child of a Holy Conception; neither a Spurious, (as *Joſeph* thought) nor a Common Conception. The Particle ἐκ does not denote the Efficient Cauſe any more here, than

it does when ſpoken of *Mary*, *Luk.* 1. 35. ἐκ σου, of thee, in thee, or by thee; and *Matth.* 1. 16. ἐξ ἧς, viz. Μαρίας, of *Mary*, or in *Mary*, ἐγεννήθη, was born, or conceived Jeſus; not that ſhe was the Cauſe of the Conception. When we ſay ſuch a Woman is with Child of a Boy, we mean her Child is a Man Child, not that a Boy impregnated her. Now what is there inconceivable, or myſtical in all this? I admire that any Man ſhould make it a difficulty to believe that God, (whom they acknowledge to be the Creator) as he hath made Seeds to grow in Plants, and fall off, and increaſe in the Earth to the due ſize of Plants; as he hath cauſed Seeds to grow in Man, which ejected into their proper place for Nouriſhment, the Matrix of the Woman are informed with a Mind, and grow to perfect, or due ſized Animals, fit to be nouriſh'd another way, and ſo come to be born, and act of themſelves, in the common order of the Creation, could not as well if he pleas'd, go for once, on a ſpecial occaſion, out of his common way in Nature, and work a Miracle in the Firſt Production of a Humane Seed, or Small Organical Body, in a Woman, and give it to a Soul of his immediate Producing, without the Will of Man: Or that this Mind, and Organical Body of God's particular making, ſhould not be thought to be an Innocent Man, free as *Adam*, that he might obey God in overcoming the greateſt Temptations. That ſuch a Perſon ſo produced was really given amongſt Men, beſides the Propheſies of him in the Old Teſtament; for inſtance; that *the Seed of the Woman ſhall bruiſe the Serpents Head*, Gen. 3. 15. *The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee, a Prophet from the midſt of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him ſhall ye hearken. According to all thou deſired'ſt of the Lord thy God in* Horeb, *in the day of the Aſſembly, ſaying, Let me not hear again the Voice of the Lord my God, neither let me ſee this great*

Fire

Fire any more that I die not: And the Lord ſaid unto me, they have well ſpoken, that which they have ſpoken. I will raiſe them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I ſhall command him, &c. *Deut.* 18. 15, 16, 17, 18, *&c.* and *a Virgin ſhall be with Child, and bring forth a Son,* &c. *Iſa.* 7. 16. See *Chap.* 11. 1, &c. *Dan.* 9. 25, 26. and *Gen.* 49. 10. Which Texts all deſerve to be well conſidered, tho' I omit to recite them at length. Beſides theſe Propheſies, I ſay, and many more agreeing with his Character, Circumſtances, and Time of Manifeſtation, we have the ſufficient Teſtimony of his Diſciples, not abſurd and contradictory, but ſuch (as we have endeavoured to ſhew) might well be conceived to be true.

All which I think, is enough to challenge the Belief of any that will give themſelves leave to conſider. Beſides the Conſideration of Chriſt's Perſon, as an Innocent, Perfectly Obedient Man, thus produced and related; it was neceſſary that God ſhould be with him in an extraordinary manner, inſpiring him with Wiſdom, enduing him with Authority, inflaming him with Love; *Luk.* 2. 40, 47, 42. acting in him (who yet acted freely with God) as it were his Organ, whereby he made known his Will, and manifeſted himſelf moſt clearly to Sinners, and was as it were converſing amongſt them; working Miracles by him to convince Men of his ſpecial Sonſhip and Miſſion; which Chriſt frequently aſſerted from that Argument of the mighty Works of God wrought by him. Which Wonders of Chriſt were alſo neceſſary to perſwade the Truth of his Doctrine as received from God, eſpecially in that part of it, where he taught the Inſufficiency of the Levitical External Worſhip, which the Jews were ſo unapt to believe other than the Will of God, or ever to be aboliſhed. But tho' Chriſt taught that which to them ſeem'd a

new

new way, they were inexcuſable in not believing him, when God concurr'd with real Signs and Wonders, which he cannot be thought to do to perſwade Falſhood, ſo much againſt his pure Will.

These Miracles wrought by his means, and by his Diſciples from his Authority, were not only teſtified by his Diſciples, but ſeen and confeſs'd by many the Oppoſers of his Doctrine. It was neceſſary, I ſay, God ſhould be with him in ſo extraordinary a Manner, who was to be the moſt Extraordinary Embaſſadour, or Inſtrument of God. And that God was ſo with him, cannot with any reaſon be doubted, if his Friends Teſtimony, and his Enemies Confeſſion of his other Miracles, be not enough; his Propheſies of ſo many things exactly fulfilled, in relation to himſelf, his Diſciples, the City of *Jeruſalem*, &c. methinks are convincing Arguments that he was the Prophet that God had promiſed, [a Prophet being to be known to be ſent of God by the things coming to paſs.] The Anointed with whom God was in a moſt ſpecial manner, and never left him, unleſs ſo far as to ſhew that the moſt Perfect Creature is inſufficient in it ſelf, and cannot be ſatisfied or pleaſed in the withdrawing of the Chearing Preſence of God. To let it appear that an Innocent Man may be grieved at the Diſobedience and Miſery of Sinners, and not only ſympathize with them in their Unhappineſs, but be afflicted by them; not only be greived at their unjuſt and wicked Doings, but ſuffer from them that Sorrow that in the common courſe of Nature, is occaſioned by what may be done to the Body. And tho' God left him ſo far to the Will of the Wicked, as that they prevailed to put him to Death, [whereby we may have occaſion to believe that *Adam* was not invulnerable, or naturally immortal before the Fall, but by the Grace of God in the Gift of the Tree of Life, and his ſpecial Providence,

which

which on his Obedience would have prevented external Hurts, and Death thereby;] tho', I ſay, God ſuffered the Wicked to put him to Death on a falſe Accuſation, as a Malefactor; and he patiently ſuffered, to give us an Example that nothing ſhould deter us from Obedience, it was neceſſary that God ſhould raiſe him from the dead. That as he had choſe Death rather than omit his Duty, God ſhould crown his Sufferings with a Reſurrection to Immortality, as a Token that he had regarded his Obedience as perfect, that he deſerved not Death; but Men unjuſtly laid hands on him, and ſlew him, and that their ſo doing was diſapproved of God. Which Reſurrection of his, being the Confirmation of his being the Chriſt, and of his having done his Work ſo far exactly, and that he would in due time finiſh it wholly, his Diſciples conſtantly witneſſed, as having ſeen him, and convers'd with him Forty days after his Suffering: and the Jews and Romans having heard it, ſaid he would riſe again after three days, taking ſtrict care to watch the Sepulchre, leaſt there ſhould be any cheat in the matter; ſo that there can be no rational doubt of it. It is very eaſie to be ſure a Man is put to Death, and as eaſie to know he is alive, if many Perſons ſee and hear him act as a living Man. On the account of his Reſurrection too, he is called the *firſt begotten Son of God*, *Rev.* 1. 5. 1 *Cor.* 15. 20. *Col.* 1. 18.

And by his Reſurrection alſo was given a Teſtimony of the Truth of his Doctrine, eſpecially of the Points of the Reſurrection of the Body, and Life immortal. And having fully inſtructed his Diſciples, and authorized them his Miniſters to proſecute the ſame end he was ſent for, *viz.* the bringing rebellious diſorderly Sinners to Repentance and Obedience; for the fulfilling his Promiſe of the Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, the Power, by means whereof they

wrought

wrought Miracles, it was requiſite he ſhould leave this Earth, (which he did in the ſight of many) and go to ſome Heavenly Manſion, till his Second Perſonal Appearance; which Angels at his Aſcenſion inform'd the Beholders ſhould be in like manner, and which he had before promiſed, and wherein he will wholly finiſh his Office of Mediator between God and Men; a part of which is his Ruling or Judging the World, fully determining what's right, and what's wrong, as God has authorized him. After which he ſhall give up that his Kingdom to his God, and Father's immediate Government; to whom he is, and then will more eminently appear to be Subject, tho' God has made him the Head, or Chief of the Creation. But I can but name things where every head would yield a large Diſcourſe.

This is the Sum and Subſtance of the Revelation of God's Will by Jeſus Chriſt. And whoſoever believes Chriſt's Doctrine, and does it, or in his own words; *He that hears his Word, and believeth on him that ſent him, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into Condemnation; but is paſſed from Death unto Life*, Joh. 5. 24. *And not every one that ſaith Lord, Lord, unto him, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of his Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. 7. 21. *But whoſoever heareth the Sayings of Chriſt, and does them not*, (whatever he may think of Chriſt, or how great ſoever an Opinion he profeſſeth of him) *hath but built upon the Sand*, v. 27. It is Obedience that is the end of all true Doctrine; and whoſoever having been convinced of Sin, and changed from doing his own diſorderly Will, does the Will of God, and perſevers in ſo doing, will be happy; nay, is ſaved, by what means ſoever this Change hath been wrought. Where the End is accompliſh'd, it is accompliſh'd. Many have been the Inſtruments, and various the Means, that God hath uſed to reduce Sin-

Sinners; and ſome rebellious ones have been changed, to comply with their Maker's Will by ſmaller Arguments, ſome by greater. The Means of Conviction God hath given the World, ſeems from the beginning to have grown greater and greater, as Wickedneſs hath increaſed; but ſome Sinners have been ſo perverſe that the greateſt Motives God has pleas'd to give them, have not done; but they have appear'd reſolved to abandon God, and to devote themſelves to their Sin and Miſery: *Yet there have been many righteous Men, who have not ſeen and heard what ſome others have*; and yet have indeed been righteous. And they that have ſeen and heard the moſt of the Manifeſtations of God, have little cauſe to cenſure and condemn them that have ſeen and heard the leaſt; when theſe have ſometimes ſhewn as much or more of the End, Goodneſs, accompliſhed in them.

39. But whatſoever means God may make effectual towards the Salvation of Men, or bringing them from Sin to Obedience, it may truly be ſaid they are all ſaved the ſame way; and that is by Chriſt. Which muſt not be underſtood that it is abſolutely neceſſary that every Man ſhould be inſtructed in the Will of God, and receive his Commends from Chriſt's own Mouth; or from thoſe he hath expreſly ſent to preach the Goſpel. Nor is it to be thought impoſſible that any ſhould be ſaved without Reading, or hearing read the Books we call the Holy Scriptures. But whoſoever is ſaved, is neceſſarily ſome way or other inſtructed in the ſame things Chriſt hath taught, *viz.* his Duty to God and his Neighbour, and brought to comply therewith; and ſo to follow Chriſt in a Life of Obedience. Chriſt is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: There is no other Way Sinners can come to the Father, but what he hath ſhown, *viz.* Repentance bringing forth the

meet

meet fruits thereof. There are no other Truths neceſſary to be known, in order to living that Life of Obedience Chriſt gave us the higheſt Example of, than what he taught. There is no other Man a Maſter or Teacher, teaching another Doctrine, in which is Salvation; for God hath given him the *chief corner ſtone of* the Spiritual Building, to which the reſt muſt be ſquared; and he hath given no other name among Men, *under Heaven, in which we muſt be ſaved.* There is none a different, or ſo compleat a Rule, *Acts* 4. 11, 12. The Way, the Truth, and the Life, is the ſame, that all muſt go in, believe, and live. However Men may diſagree in Speculations and Opinions; if they know but enough to ſubject their Wills in Agreement to this Life of Obedience, which Chriſt in the name of God commanded, and himſelf gave an Example of, they may meet in Heaven. Thoſe that diſagree from this Living Rule, and perſevere in their Diſſention, will not ſee Life, notwithſtanding their higheſt Pretences to Faith or Knowledge. And if I am brought to ſubmit to the Will of my Maker by reading the Bible, or hearing Diſcourſes on it; it does not follow that none could be inform'd of the ſame Truths, and reduced to the ſame Obedience any other way. Before the Scripture was written, there were Righteous Men accepted of God no doubt; and ſince, the Love of God has appeared larger than the Love of Chriſtians in recommending and communicating that moſt uſeful Book to the reſt of Mankind. For there have been Examples, out of the Pale of the viſible Chriſtian Church, of ſuch a Life as would become a conſiderable Chriſtian; at leaſt of ſuch as was proportionable to the meaſure of Knowledge: And ſome things left ſo excellent in the Writings of ſome of thoſe we call Heathens, that Charity methinks would excuſe me if I ſhould eſteem them Chriſtians indeed, without

out the name, or ſuch in Conformity to the Will of God, as Chriſtians ſhould be. And there have been not a few, who have been no happier than to be educated in the Worſhip of the True God, under no better an Inſtructer than *Moſes*, or *Mahomet*, that might have ſhamed the Nominal Chriſtian to behold their Vertues. God ſent Prophets of old in a ſpecial manner to inſtruct the Sons of *Heber*, and doubtleſs it was their Duty to teach others the Knowledge and Worſhip of the True God; and he ſent his Son Jeſus alſo, firſt unto ſome of them; but Chriſt commanded his Diſciples to teach all Nations. If Hebrews and Chriſtians have not done their Duty, it cannot be thought that therefore the reſt of Mankind muſt needs all periſh. But they have not only been negligent in endeavouring the Information and Reformation of all Mankind, but have been even Stumbling-blocks; not only by teaching for the Oracles of God, the unreaſonable Traditions of Men, but even by their wicked Lives, and uncharitable Actions: Yet *God hath not left himſelf without a Witneſs in all Nations*; but his Goodneſs hath been an Argument to perſwade to Obedience, ſome of thoſe *who have ſeen the inviſible things of God, from the Creation of the World*; *being underſtood by the things that are made, even his External Power and Godhead.* The Light of Reaſon hath been univerſal to all Mankind; and thoſe who have acted according to that Light, where through the fault of others no more hath been given, doubtleſs no more will be required. Nor dare we deny but that God may have ſometimes acted graciouſly by his Spirit, where the Letter of the Goſpel hath been wanting. So that many I am perſwaded will come from the Eaſt and from the Weſt, and ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of Heaven, that in the opinion of many Chriſtians are excluded: In whoſe Hearts

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perhaps hath been more of the Love of God and Man, than in many of those Christians so ready to condemn them, who I doubt are more likely to be themselves shut out. I think it may be well said of the Christian and Christianity in this matter, as the Apostle speaks of the Jew, and Circumcision, *Rom.* 2. 29. *He is not a Christian which is one outwardly; neither is that Christianity which consists in outward things; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; and Christianity, or the Religion that Christ taught, is that of the Heart in the Spirit; and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.* The fruits of which Christian *Spirit, are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance; against such who are endued with these Vertues, there is no Law,* Gal. 5. 22. But the advantage of the visible Christans is much; *because unto them are committed the Oracles of God, and where much is given, much will be required.* The bare believing Christ to be the Messias, yea the Faith of those who believe most concerning his Person, will not be found enough, or a Saving Faith; but the believing his Doctrine so as to do the Will of his Father, is that which will give a Title to the Promise of Admission into the Kingdom of Heaven, *Matth.* 7. 21.

40. To perswade to Repentance, or a turning from a Life of Sin, to a Life of Obedience to God, we find the chief End and Scope not only of the Gospel, but of the other parts of the Old and New Testaments; which Books the Divine Providence hath graciously given and preserved, as a means to that End. Many have undertaken to prove these Books to be the Word of God, but they have not all gone the right way to do it. Some think they do not enough, unless they can perswade us that every word in them was given by Immediate Inspiration. But there is no need of such a Belief, if a considerate

tate Perſon were capable of having it. That they were given by the Good Providence of God, none can well doubt. But ſome part of them, as the Hiſtorical, needed no ſuch thing as Inſpiration: Some part, as the Prophetical, could not come without it. But a due eſteem of the Scripture may be had, and its End well accompliſhed, taking it altogether as it is, and as none can in reaſon deny it to be, *viz.* conſidering the parts of it, as ſome inſpir'd, ſome written according to the Knowledge of Faithful Men, ſome deliver'd according to the Wiſdom given the Writers thereof. But the Affirmation that every Word of it is inſpired, is not only no Point of Faith neceſſary to Salvation, or ever thought ſo, (as I can find) by the Primitive Chriſtians; but has divers Inconveniences following it, which are Grounds of Objection to Athieſts and Deiſts. As for Inſtance; There are ſome little Difficulties in the Hiſtorical Part, which are better attributed to ſome Miſtake in the Writer or Coppier, than to God: Some few things in the Old Teſtament that ſeem diſſonant to the Spirit of the Goſpel, which are better thought to be from the Spirit of the Writer, than from the Spirit of God, *&c.* Some reckon by name ſo many Books of the Old and New Teſtaments, and go about to prove them the Word of God firſt, before they have well conſidered what they contain: But I think we ſhould begin there, and ſee what we find written in them; for we cannot well aſſert any thing to be of God, till we know what it is. To talk of believing this or that to be a Revelation, or the Word of God, before we know what it ſpeaks, is very inconſiderate. But when we find things that are apparently good, reaſonable, excellent, and ſuitable to the Underſtanding, Nature, and Circumſtances of Man; a Deſign moſt profitable to Man, and becoming God, we may well, nay cannot but think God the Supream,

pream, or First Author, however or by whomsoever they were given. The Truths would have been the same had they never been written; but as they are written, the Way of their Delivery, the Matters of Fact, or Historical part, appearing to have all the Marks of Truth a History can, or at least needs have, cannot in reason but be believed. Whosoever (for instance) should deny the History of Jesus Christ, may as well reject all History, or question the Truth of every thing others declare as Witnesses; which would be very foolish: Nor could such a one reasonably desire any Man should believe him, in any thing he relates, tho' never so probable. Now as God in his good Providence hath given us the Bible; a Book (if considerately read appearing to be) more full of Instructions, Precepts, and Examples tending to bring Man, who is turn'd aside, to the exact way of his Natural Allegiance, or Religion to God, than any other Book; it cannot but be acknowledged that the Bible is a great and estimable Gift of God, not to be under-valued as an Ordinary Book, nor yet to be idolized as the uncorruptible Word of God, but to be duly used to our Benefit. And I think I may be bold to say in relation to the Contents of this Book, and all others; whatsoever has not an Instruction in it to inform Man of his Duty to God and his Neighbour; or cannot yield an Argument to perswade him to be reconciled thereto, cannot rationally be thought a Dictate of God, but is better suppos'd (should there be found any such thing) meerly from Man. And, I think, tho' we grant that the Bible is not free from all manner of Corruptions, but that some Mistakes have been therein made, at least by Coppiers; tho' we affirm many Faults to have been committed by Translators, so that better Translations are not only to be desired, but also wanted; yet we cannot rationally

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have the leſs eſteem of what is uncontroverted, the Sum and Subſtance, End and Deſign thereof. Nor have we any reaſon (ſince we may read the Book it ſelf) to look upon the Bible as it is moſt abuſed and deform'd by Expoſitors; who, if we were to take it from them, have repreſented it to us but as a contradictory or confuſed Rule.

41. For we find many things taught by them, who take upon them to expound the Scripture, as Doctrines clearly expreſs'd (as they ſay) therein, that have not only no apt Tendency to the Great End, the Love of God and Man; but ſome of them naturally tend, or incline to the contrary. Which Conſideration bringeth me to the laſt thing I deſigned to ſpeak to; the laſt Stumbling-block I ſhall endeavour to take out of the Deiſts way, *viz.* The Conſideration of divers Doctrines now confidently taught as Orthodox, and main Points of Chriſtian Faith; which to render Chriſtianity more reaſonable, more like it ſelf, I ſhall not only readily diſown, but endeavour to ſhew that they cannot reaſonably be thought to be Doctrines of the Goſpel, neceſſary to Chriſtianity, or True: That they cannot be accounted for, or proved Points of a Rational Faith, or truly deduced from the Bible: But are Miſtakes taken up through Prejudice, from Tradition, and confirm'd by miſtaken Texts of Scripture. It being an Evil but common Cuſtom among Men to take up Opinions before they carefully read the Scripture, or conſider the Agreement or Diſagreement of things; and then to labour to make the Scripture prove, and confirm them; endeavouring to bring Scripture to their unreaſonable Opinions, when they ſhould rather have brought their Opinions from Scripture and Reaſon; Scripture ſo underſtood as to be reconcileable to it ſelf, and to Right Reaſon. And as this word *reconcileable* brings into my Mind the notion of Reconci-

ſiation, which I take to be miſunderſtood by many, I ſhall firſt begin with that Point, and endeavour to ſhew the Miſtakes about it.

42. It is the fancy of ſome that Chriſt has reconciled God to Sinners: Let us a little conſider the matter. Reconciliation is a making Friends of ſome or other at variance. When there is Diſagreement, Enmity, or Hate in a Perſon that did agree, love, and was a Friend, the taking away, or changing theſe for Agreement, Friendſhip and Love, is properly Reconciliation. Now to ſay that Chriſt hath reconciled God to us, is as much as to ſay God was a Friend, and did love Man, but then became an Enemy, and hated him; and then was made a Friend, and loved him again. But this can with no good reaſon be ſaid of God, becauſe he is unchangeable, and theſe things imply a Change. Fooliſh Men are very apt to look upon God to be ſuch a one as themſelves; now willing one thing, then another; now angry, then pleas'd; becauſe they find themſelves ſo. But ſuch things are Imperfections, incompatible with a Self-ſufficient Being. God has properly no Paſſions muſt be confeſs'd, tho' Men do commonly ſpeak of him as if he had; and he is in Scripture ſo repreſented ſometimes, after the manner of Men. But he is the ſame ſtill, has the ſame Will, the ſame Love to whatever is his own, and cannot have leſs. He repreſents himſelf as he is, hating Sin, or that unjuſt and unhappy Action of the Creatures willing contrary to its Maker's Will: but he never hates the Creature, his own Work, but loves it. He cannot be ſuppos'd to be reconciled to Sin, he never loved, or can love Injuſtice: To ſuppoſe him ſo reconciled as to approve, like, or allow Sin in his Creature, would be to ſuppoſe him to will Evil, or contrary to his own Will. And he is not reconciled to his Creature, becauſe he was never decon-

deconciled, or an Enemy to it. His Goodneſs and Bounty is over all his Works; he is always ready to do Good to his Creatures, and make them happy; it is they that are Enemies to him, and to themſelves, and to their own Happineſs. A Man that runs into a Cave, and hides himſelf from the Light and Warmth of the Sun, and is perſwaded at length to come out, and receive the Benefit of its Heat and Splendour, may as well ſay the Sun was angry with him, and hid his Face, and withheld his Beams; but now is reconciled to him, and ſhines on him again; as to fancy that the Ever-overflowing-fountain of Good withholds his Streams from the Works of his hands. He is the moſt loving Father, that is always ready to do Good to his Children; but they, Rebellious, will not always receive it. Therefore we may boldly, nay we muſt on good Conſideration ſay, that whatever Chriſt hath done and ſuffered, does not make God any more willing Sinners ſhould obey him, or be ſaved, than he was before. If he could at any time will Sinners not to obey him, he might be ſuppos'd not to will them to be ſaved; but to will Sinners not to obey him, is all one as to will his Will to be done, and not done at the ſame time, which is a Contradiction. We find fooliſh Men commonly repreſenting God as one full of Wrath, Anger, Hatred, to his poor, ſilly, Fallen Creatures; ſevere, furious, and hard to be appeas'd; but Chriſt as one full of Love, Mercy, Pitty, Good-will to Sinners; but we muſt not think God to have leſs Love, Goodneſs, Mercy, *&c.* than Chriſt; that would be unreaſonable, when there can be no leſs than an Infinite Diſtance between God, and the moſt Perfect Creature, in Goodneſs, Mercy, Kindneſs, and all Perfections; yea as much as God is above Man, ſo much greater muſt we think is the Mercy, Goodneſs, and Love of the Father to Sin-

ners, than that of the Son; who is but the Image of him that is greater than all: *God ſo loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* The Love of God was the Cauſe of Chriſt's both Sonſhip and Miſſion, and the Cauſe muſt be greater than the Effect. God could have no external Cauſe, or Motive to love us, but loveth us freely; for he is Love, which can be ſaid of no Second. No Man hath greater Love than Chriſt; for he laid down his Life for us even while we were Enemies: but he had a Motive to Love, greater than from himſelf, *viz.* his Duty to obey, and imitate God his Father. Moreover, if God has commanded all Sinners to repent, believe, and be ſaved, he muſt be ſuppoſed to will that they ſhould do ſo, or he deceives them; which cannot be admitted: If he wills them to repent and be ſaved, he is not their Enemy, but their Friend. What then, you will ſay, did Chriſt come to reconcile? I ſay, with the Scripture, to reconcile us to God, who were Enemies to him by wicked Works; to reconcile us to our beſt Friend and Father, from whom we had gone aſtray, and been prodigal Sons; to reconcile us to our Duty, yea to our own Happineſs, which can no way be attained but by Love and Obedience to God. And when we return to our Father's Houſe, and acknowledge our Folly and Rebellion, then we ſhall find it true that God is our beſt Friend, and was ſo before we thought of returning. It was an Opinion in the Pagan Divinity, that their Gods were ſometimes angry, and muſt be attoned or reconciled, and intreated to do them no Miſchief, or to be favourable to them; and this they thought was to be done by ſome thing or other, which they fancied was more pleaſing to the Gods, than that which they were angry at was diſpleaſing, ſomething or other they liked

liked ſo much better than doing Good, that they were thereby over perſwaded to do them ſuch Favours they would not otherwiſe have done; ſuch a pleaſure to them, in their opinion, was the ſlaying of a Beaſt, and the offering it to them, yea the horrid Act of ſacrificing Men. But Chriſtians ſhould have a better Opinion of God, who are taught that he is Love, that is unchangeable Good-will. Who can imagine that the Blood of a Lamb pour'd out, or the waſting of a Bullock on an Altar, or the Death, yea the Murder of an Innocent Man, can be ſo grateful to the Moſt High, as to make him a Friend when he was ſuppos'd before to be an angry Enemy? Can this be an Argument to prevail with him to alter his Mind, and like the Sinner any better? What Delight or Advantage can we ſuppoſe the Death, or Spoiling any Creature, can be to the Self ſufficient God? Tho' Chriſt for ſome Reaſons is compar'd to, or call'd a Sacrifice, we can with no good reaſon retain the vulgar notion of it, or believe that he by his being murder'd, appeas'd God's Wrath, and made him change from an angry Enemy, to a pleaſed, loving Friend, or render'd him leſs diſliking the Sins of Men, than he was before: No, the Enmity is in Man againſt God, not in God againſt Man; it is Man that is to be changed, not God. Beſides, nothing but a wonderful Prejudice can make us think, that the Murder of the moſt innocent Man the World ever had, ſhould be ſo much more pleaſing to the moſt Juſt God, than all other Sins were diſpleaſing; ſo that That, and nothing elſe could pacifie him, or make him willing Men that had ſinn'd, ſhould yet obey him, and be happy. Did we but conſider, we ſhould never have hopes to digeſt this opinion, ſo many hard things are in the bowels of it. If God hath commanded all Men not to kill; can we with any ſenſe think that God is at any time

pleas'd with the breach of that Command? Yea, that the moſt Innocent muſt needs be murder'd, that God might be juſtly pleas'd with the Guilty, yea his Murderers? This is to make Wickedneſs neceſſary, and God pleas'd with it, yea implacable without it: This is to repreſent God worſe than *Man*: This is to ſuppoſe that ſome muſt of neceſſity ſin, and be damned, or elſe none could poſſibly be ſaved. Ah poor *Judas*, that never taught'ſt us ſuch hard things of God; muſt thou needs betray thy Innocent Maſter, and be damn'd, that we might be ſaved, who think ſo hardly of our Maker? Why not another, that thou might'ſt be ſaved; or why not we, for others that have a better opinion of God? But God has without exception forbid all Injuſtice, and eſpecially the ſhedding Innocent Blood; and if Men had believed, and obeyed God as they ought, and conſequently might; if they had received Chriſt's Doctrine, and follow'd his Example, as it was God's Will, and ſo their Duty, there would have been none to have ſlain Chriſt; but Men would, nay muſt have been ſaved without any ones committing ſuch a nefarious Fact. Yea, if the Husband-men had yeilded the Due Fruits, at the Approach of the Servants, they would have been far from being ſo wicked as to have murder'd the Son. Again, if God could have been ſuppoſed to will that Chriſt ſhould be put to Death; if the Slaying of Chriſt had been that without which God would not be pleas'd, it had been no Sin in thoſe that did it, but ſome Bodies Duty to kill him; and ſo the notion of their being Murderers or Sinners in that Action, had been deſtroyed. But God never commanded any to put him to Death; but the Action of thoſe who did it, is ſpoken of in Scripture with the higheſt Diſapprobation. But Chriſt was to be a Sacrifice, you will ſay. I anſwer, That the buſineſs of Sacrifices is not well conſider'd

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by many, nor does the Death of Chriſt agree with the common notion of a Sacrifice, tho' he is in ſome ſenſe call'd a Sacrifice. Chriſt is call'd a Prieſt, and an Altar, and a Sacrifice, when one Perſon cannot poſſibly be all theſe in a proper ſenſe. The Prieſts ſlew the Sacrifices; Chriſt ſlew not himſelf, or any other; nor were thoſe who ſlew him Prieſts for that purpoſe. The Prieſts might without Sin ſlay the Beaſts they offered; thoſe that ſlew Chriſt had the abſolute Prohibition of God, in the Sixth Commandment. The Offerings with the Levitical Prieſthood, not being to be thought for any Profit or Pleaſure to God Almighty, could have no reaſon except ſome profit to Man might come thereby; ſome of them fed the Levites, who had no portion among their Brethren, a People needing a ſufficient number of Teachers of the Moral and Civil Law, could they have been contented to be unlike the Nations round about them, ſatisfied with a Spiritual Worſhip and Pure Theocracy, without the more pompous and inſignificant Ceremonies; but God knowing the Inclination of that People, let them have work burthenſom enough, to keep them from the Abominations of the Heathen; had they ſhewed their Obedience in obſerving no more than what they were directed in, a burden expenſive enough to drain their Superfluities, and enure them to ſpare, when they ſhould come more to need the Beneficence of one another, when they were no longer a Peculiar People. But whatever might be the Original Reaſon of Sacrifices, or what apt Tendency there might at any time be found in them, to bring Man to his Chief End; we do not find that any of the Inhabitants of the Earth except the Hebrews, nor they till they came into the Wilderneſs, had any Inſtitutions or Directions about Sacrificing Animals; however Mankind, Hebrews and others,

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came to be ſo fond of it for ſo many Ages. But to leave this, that we may conceive how Chriſt may be call'd a Sacrifice, let us conſider what we find in Scripture as the moſt Plain Diſcoveries of God's Mind in relation to Sacrifice, by the Prophets and Apoſtles, *Pſal.* 50.8. *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me.* Ver. 9. *I will take no Bullock out of thy Houſe, nor He-goats out of thy Folds.* Ver. 10. *For every Beaſt of the Forreſt is mine, and the Cattel upon a thouſand Hills.* Ver. 11. *I know the Fowls of the Mountains, and the wild Beaſts of the Field are mine,* V. 12. *If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the World is mine, and the Fulneſs thereof.* V. 13. *Will I eat the fleſh of Bulls, or drink the blood of Goats?* V. 14. *Offer unto God Thankſgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the moſt High.* V. 15. *And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.* Pſal. 51.16. *Thou deſiredſt not Sacrifice, elſe would I give it, thou delighteſt not in Burnt-offerings.* V. 17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit,* &c. Jer. 7.22. *I ſpake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the Land of* Egypt, *concerning Burnt-offerings or Sacrifices.* V. 23. *But this thing commanded I them ſaying, obey my Voice, and I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people,* &c. 1 Sam. 15.22. *To obey is better than ſacrifice.* Hoſ. 6. 6. *God will have mercy, and not ſacrifice.* Math. 9.13. *If ye had known what this meaneth I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice: Ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs.* Spoken to the Jews condemning his Diſciples, when they being hungry plucked the Ears of Corn, but might have been ſaid to them rather when they afterwards more unjuſtly condemned and ſlew him. Iſ. 1. 11. *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me, ſaith the Lord? I am full of the Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the fat of fed Beaſts, and I dilight not in the blood of Bullocks, or*

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of Lambs, or of He-goats, &c. And at the 16th. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil.* Ver. 17. *Learn to do well, seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow.* Mich. 6. 6, 7, 8. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the High God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-offerings, with Calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of Oil? Shall I give my first-born for my Transgression, or the fruit of my Body for the sin of my Soul? He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good: And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God. But the sacrifices of God,* Psal. 107. 22. *are sacrifices of Thanksgiving:* Psal. 4. 5. *Sacrifices of Righteousness:* 1 Pet. 2. 5. *Spiritual Sacrifices: Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ: Sacrifices of praise and doing good,* Heb. 13. 15, 16. *By him therefore let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name: But to do good, and communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased: Sacrifices of love to God and our Neighbour:* Mark 12. 33. *And to love him with all the Heart, and with all the Understanding, and all the Soul, and with all the Strength, and to love his Neighbour as himself, is more than all whole Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices: Living Sacrifices:* Rom. 12. 1. *I beseech you therefore Brethren by the mercies of God that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* And the Author to the *Hebrews, chap.* 10. 5. brings Christ in from *Psal.* 40. 6, *&c.* saying to God, *A Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldest not, but a Body hast thou prepared me,* as the Septuagint reads it; but the Hebrew hath it, אזנים כרית, *my Ears hast thou digged, viz.* opened to hear thy Commands, not to

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Sacrifice certainly; for ſaith he, *in Burnt-offerings, and Sacrifices for ſin, thou hadſt no pleaſure: Then ſaid I, Lo I come to do thy Will, O God. Above when he ſaid Sacrifices, and Burnt-offerings for ſin thou wouldeſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure therein,* &c. *Then ſaid I, Lo I come to do thy Will, O God. He taketh away the firſt,* viz. Sacrifice, *that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond*; *viz.* doing the Will of God: *By the which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt once for all,* &c. Ver. 16. *This is the Covenant I will make with them after thoſe days,* (ſpeaking, *Jer.* 31. 33. of the New Covenant) *ſaith the Lord, I will put my Laws into their Hearts, and in their Minds will I write them.* Ver. 17. *And their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more.* Ver. 18. *Now where remiſſion of theſe is, there is no more offering for ſin,* &c.

From all which places compared, and many more that we might conſider, it appears that Chriſt is a Sacrifice or Offering acceptable to God, as he does his Will in proſecuting the end of his Miſſion, the bringing Sinners to Repentance, and Obedience to God, againſt all oppoſition, even Death it ſelf; giving up his Body to Death, rather than omit any thing he was to do. And Sinners have the benefit of this Sacrifice; not as God is appeas'd, atton'd, or reconciled to Sin or Sinners by any pleaſure that can be added to him by beholding the Pain, Bloodſhed, or Death of an innocent Man; but rather as they are attoned, or reconciled to God, and their Duty to him, by beholding Chriſt's Obedience in doing the Will of his Father, even under the greateſt Sufferings (even to Death) he could meet with from the oppoſition of Earth and Hell; his Conſtancy being a convincing Argument that his Doctrine was good, and his Life to be imitated; a Perſwaſive to follow him in Goſpel, or exact Moral Obedience, through whatſoever Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake,

ſake, leaving all thoſe external and childiſh things of the Levitical Prieſthood as uſeleſs. Wherefore as a better Covenant God ſaith, *He will put his Laws into their Hearts.* What Laws? The Laws of Offerings, and Ceremonies might poſſibly be put into their Hearts; no, ſuch Laws as readily come into the Hearts of conſidering Perſons; ſuch as we have *ver.* 24. viz. *Love and good Works.* So that the Obedience of Chriſt is the Chriſtian Sacrifice, but not ours, by its pacifying God for us Sinners; but by our following it as it is an Example, in offering up all we are and have in love to God, which is our reaſonable Duty. Chriſt may alſo be ſaid to be ſacrificed for us as he dedicated and offered up his Life in proſecuting the Good of Sinners, by teaching them, and perſwading them to be reconciled to God. He may alſo be ſaid to be a Sacrifice to the Wrath and Malice of the wicked Jews, as they devoted him, and gave him up to Death according to the Councel of *Caiaphas*, to prevent the Romans coming upon them, on the noiſe of his being ſaid to be the King of the Jews; they ſuppoſing (as alſo his Diſciples for ſome time did) that he meant then to ſet up an earthly Kingdom, thinking it was *better that one Man ſhould die than that the whole Nation ſhould periſh.*

Again, Chriſt is call'd a Propitiation; not that he makes God merciful, or propitious to us, but that he makes us capable to experience God's Mercy and Kindneſs; teaching us the way of Repentance and Obedience, wherein God is found merciful and ready to forgive. The Propitiatory, or Mercy-Seat, from whence Chriſt is call'd a Propitiation, was the Cover of the Ark, or Coffer wherein were the Ten Words, or Commandments; which did not tipifie Chriſt as hiding the Commands or Law from God, or interpoſing between God and the Commands; but ſignified rather that thoſe who will come to the

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Seat of God's Mercy, will find the Commands muſt be kept; and tho' they have run from, or broke the Commands, if they will repent, and return to the Commands, there they will find God's Mercy above, or greater than the Command, or their Sin. So Chriſt the living Table, from whoſe Mouth, and in whoſe Life the Commandments of God were moſt fairly given to Men, comes declaring God merciful, ready to forgive; but gives us to underſtand whom he will forgive, and ſhew Mercy to, even the Merciful; thoſe that forgive, or are ready to be conformable to the Will or Commands of God, and not the Impenitent.

43. There is another opinion that has prevailed much in the World, which is this; That Chriſt by what he did or ſuffer'd, or by both, hath made perfect or full Satisfaction to God for the breach of his Laws by Sinners. But this opinion by a little Conſideration, I think will appear to be a groundleſs, abſurd, and impoſſible Fancy, and accompanied with divers evil Tendencies. As firſt it is incompatable with, and deſtroys the notion of Divine Forgiveneſs: For where-ever a debt is fully paid, it cannot alſo be truely ſaid to be forgiven; there is no Forgiveneſs but where ſomething due is abated; which I think is evident to all Men. If I owe a Sum of Money, tho' I am not able, or never do pay it; yet if I have a Friend that can, and does pay it for me, my Creditor does not forgive me. The greateſt Pretence of an Anſwer to this Objection againſt Chriſt ſatisfying, I ever heard, is this. That tho' Chriſt hath fully ſatisfied, or pay'd the Debt for Sinners, yet God may be ſaid to forgive, becauſe Chriſt is a Perſon that God hath found out, given, or prepar'd for this purpoſe. To which I anſwer; If Chriſt be intirely the Gift of God, or hath nothing but what he receives from God, he hath nothing to pay another's

ther's Debt with; all he has, and is, is lent him of God, and is due on his own account; ſo that all his poſſible Obedience is but juſt enough to keep himſelf from needing Forgiveneſs. He that owes all he has, cannot ſpare to pay anothers Debts, without rendering himſelf incapable of paying his own. If Chriſt hath any thing, or is any thing, which he has not, or is not from God, (which I think none will ſay) whereby he might be fancied capable of Works of Supererogation wherewith to make God amends for the Debts of Sinners, God would be nevertheleſs paid their Debts; and ſo the Sinner not forgiven. As if a Perſon owe me Money and can't pay it, tho' I find out, and perſwade another to pay the Debt, I have my due, and I have not forgiven it. But let us conſider this point a little more cloſely, as the matter is in it ſelf, and without Alluſions. The Law of God to his Creatures requires Perfect, Perpetual, and Perſonal Obedience; that is, that every Creature, according to its Capacity, always ſhould will as God wills. The End of the Law of God is Obedience, or that it never be broken; now the Creature having diſobey'd, or will'd otherwiſe than God wills, nothing can poſſibly make it true that it hath not diſobey'd; conſequently there can be no Perfect Satisfaction to the Demands of the Law, when once 'tis broken. He that never breaks the Law, is indeed juſt, and fully ſatisfies it; he that has broke it, may poſſibly come to keep it for the future; but this Law ſaith, *thou ſhalt, and thou ſhalt not*, without excepting at any time what the Creature is capable of; ſo that future Obedience cannot ſatisfie for former Diſobedience; becauſe the Obedience of all the Creatures time is due; and the perfect and perpetual Obedience of every Creature is but juſt enough. What is done amiſs can never be undone; the Obedience that is unpaid, can never be paid for the

the time paſt, becauſe the time paſt wherein I ought to have been obedient, is irrevocable. Now if a Man's own Imperfect, Partial Obedience, or that which was not always, can't Satisfie, or be Enough, or Equivalent for, and with Perfect, Full, and Perpetual Obedience; much leſs can the Obedience of one, be the ſame with his own and anothers Obedience, and ſo ſatisfie or be enough for the unperformed Duty of another. If I have ſinned, tho' Chriſt hath obey'd, Chriſt's Obedience doth not make it true that I have not ſinn'd, it is not as much Obedience as his own and mine too, which the Law requires; nor makes it that which was, or is due to God, not to have been due, or now not due. If I have ſinn'd the Law is broke, and nothing can poſſibly make it unbroke; and unleſs it were wholly unbroke, there is not enough done, or Satisfaction made to the Law. Some ſort of Sins as they are againſt Man, may indeed be ſatisfied for to Man, becauſe Man may get or looſe, and ſometimes receive an advantage greater than his loſs: But the Evil of Sin lies not in God's getting or looſing by Obedience or Diſobedience; for God cannot be profited. All the Creature has, he has from God; and all God requires him, is but his Duty, and the leaſt breach of the Law makes it not kept enough. He that is once guilty of a breach of God's Law, it remains for ever true of him that he has broke it, and is guilty. All that can poſſibly be done on the part of the Sinner, when the Command has been broke, is that it be kept for the future, and more than is poſſible in this caſe cannot be done. Therefore the beſt that can be conceived as to what has been done amiſs, is that it be forgiven. He that comes at length to keep God's Law perfectly, may be ſaid then to ſatisfie it, not to have ſatisfied it. Chriſt we believe did always perfectly ſatisfie the Law of God for himſelf; and as he

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is the Inſtrument that brings Men to Repentance and Obedience, he is ſaid to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs: So he is ſaid to juſtifie as he brings Men to be juſt. But Chriſt's keeping the Law, cannot poſſible be ſaid to be another's keeping it, that don't keep it, or ſerve inſtead of it. It is not enough that one Perſon fulfil the Law, all ſhould do ſo. There can be no obeying by Proxy in this matter; ſuch a Fancy would be no better than being ſaved, or going to Heaven only by Proxy. Again, if future Obedience cannot be Obedience for the time paſt in Diſobedience; and if one Man's Obedience cannot be another Man's Obedience, much leſs can the Suffering, or Unhappineſs a Creature meets with in or by Sin, be a Satisfaction for Sin, or inſtead of Obedience, or enough without it. The Law of God does not ſay, it is alike acceptible to the Lawgiver, that you do which you will, obey, or be miſerable in diſobeying; but ſaith abſolutely, *thou ſhalt, and thou ſhalt not*; do ſo and ſo. To be unhappy is no Duty or Debt we owe to God; nor is our Diſcontent, tho' we are diſcontented for ever, equivalent to, or that which God takes inſtead of our being pleas'd, in our Maker's Will. 'Tis Obedience only he requires: Happineſs and Miſery are but the natural Conſequences of our being obedient or diſobedient, yea in ſome ſenſe the ſame as Obedience and Diſobedience. To forbid Sin is alſo to forbid Miſery; Miſery cannot be alike acceptable to God as Obedience, any more than Sin can. God's Law is never the leſs broke by the Creatures being unhappy, or diſcontent, but rather the more; becauſe Diſcontent is grounded chiefly in willing either that which is not good, or that which is not poſſible. God can never will the Creatures Miſery, inſtead of Obedience; for to be unhappy by willing otherwiſe than God wills, is but continued Diſobedience to God,

who wills all Men to repent, believe, and obey, or elſe it were not their Duty. And he wills them to be ſaved from their Sins, or elſe he could not will them to obey, which is the ſame thing. God cannot abſolutely will Unhappineſs to the Creature without willing the cauſe of it, its Sin; nay what God wills me to do can't properly be call'd my Sin, but my Duty; and none can well believe Duty is the Cauſe of Miſery. Sinners tho' damned, and becoming as miſerable as poſſible, do not thereby ſatisfie the Law of God, ſuffering by Sinning, not being Obedience, but doing ones Duty. That a Murderer, or Thief, is commonly ſaid to have ſatisfied the Law, when he is put to Death, is a vulgar Error, eſpecially if it be meant of God's Law, according to which Humane Laws ought to ſpeak. The cauſe why God has ordered a Murderer to be put to Death, is not to ſatisfie the Law: Which ſaith, *Thou ſhalt not kill*; for that could not be ſaid to be kept enough, tho' the Death of the Murderer would reſtore the life he took away; for it was but enough, if he had never committed Murder ſo much as in deſire. But the Murderer ſuffers Death rather becauſe Satisfaction can't be made; that he may be prevented doing ſuch an irrepairable Wickedneſs any more. He that hath once by ſuch an Act declar'd himſelf a dangerous Enemy to Mankind, one that regards not his Maker's Law, but is very likely to be the loſs of other Lives better than his, if he be ſuffer'd to live, dies to prevent greater Evil, and to ſave *more precious* Lives. For any other Man's life is worth more than the life of ſuch a Madman as a Murderer, being likely to be more beneficial to Mankind than ſuch an inimical and dangerous Perſon. But in ſome Sins, as they are committed againſt Man, Satisfaction may poſſibly be made to Man; and I think it unreaſonable, as well as diſſonant to the Laws of God, that a

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Man ſhould be put to Death for an Injury done to another Man, where Satisfaction may fully be made, as in Theft, *&c.* If I am robb'd, what is ſo taken from me may be reſtor'd with ſuch advantage that I may be really no looſer, but have that returned that will be better to me than what was taken away, and countervail for the fear, danger, or other Damages I may have ſuffer'd in being robb'd; ſo that then I cannot truly count my ſelf a Looſer, but rather a Gainer. And by ſuch Satisfaction made, the Thief will be a ſufficient Looſer, without looſing life, which is of more value than all the Goods a Man hath. And if all the Goods I have is of leſs value to me than my Life, I cannot but grant that all I have is of leſs value than anothers Life. It is certainly beſt where there is leaſt Evil, and the deſigns of all wiſe Lawgivers is, that there may be as little evil as poſſible: The firſt intent of a Law is, that it ſhould be kept: The ſecond, that if it be broken, amends may be made if poſſible, or as far as can be. And the laſt, that the Tranſgreſſor be prevented, or diſcouraged from doing ſo any more. Now in the caſe of Theft, if I am robb'd my Reaſon preſently tells me, I ought in Juſtice to have what was took from me reſtor'd, (if it may be) which is better, and more deſirable to me than that the Thief ſhould be deſtroy'd, which no way makes me amends, unleſs I could count the devilliſh pleaſure I may take in his Miſery, equivalent to my Goods: But if the Thief be cauſed to make Reſtitution, there is leſs evil, which if it were made with ſufficient intereſt for what he robb'd, or borrow'd againſt my Will, the Thief would be ſufficiently diſcouraged by finding Thieving an unprofitable trade, and no way for his intereſt. Where the Robber has nothing to reſtore, he might ſerve in Priſon, and work it out. By which means ſuch Crimes would be more prevented, as being made the

way to Poverty, and Work, the things ſuch covetous Perſons ſeek to avoid by ſtealing from others; when Death it ſelf is to them but as a deſperate cure of the Diſeaſe of Want, which ſome paſſionate Perſons in this, and other Diſcontents, will inflict upon themſelves.

But to leave this Digreſſion; If the Sinner's own Miſery is not a Satisfying God's Law equal to Obedience, anothers Miſery can much leſs be a Satisfaction for him; and leaſt of all can the Suffering of Chriſt, an innocent Perſon, ſatisfie the Law of God broken by Sinners. It is true, Chriſt ſuffered for Sinners, as well as by Sinners; that is, he underwent all the Sufferings he met with in proſecuting their Good, for their ſakes; becauſe he would not have ſuffered had it not been for them. But tho Chriſt ſuffered for Sinners and by Sinners, it cannot therefore be ſaid Sinners have not ſinned, or that they have done enough of the Law. And as Chriſt's doing righteouſly, is not the Sinner's doing ſo, ſo Chriſt's Suffering is not the Sinner's Suffering, could Suffering be equivalent to, or pleaſe God as well as Obedience; much leſs is Chriſt's Suffering the Sinner's doing his Duty. People very confidently fancy, and aſſert moſt abſurd things of Chriſt's Sufferings; That God is ſo mightily pleas'd therewith, that he is not ſo much diſpleas'd with Sin; nay, that he don't diſlike all other Sin ſo much, as he likes his innocent Son's Undeſerved Suffering from the hands of Sinners. They fancy God loves the Miſery of his poor guilty Creatures ſo much, that nothing muſt prevent it; rather than he will not have the pleaſing ſight of as great pains as all his fallen Creatures can poſſibly ſuffer, he will have it in the Innocent. They repreſent God as one that taketh pleaſure in the Death of him that dies; in the Death of the Innocent for the Guilty; as one much more pleas'd with the

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Puniſhment of the Juſt, than of the Tranſgreſſor. The moſt blameleſs Creature that ever was, muſt not be abated one dram of Torment they can deviſe, fancy due, or wiſh to their moſt wicked Enemies. They are not contented Chriſt ſhould ſuffer thoſe things mercileſs and unjuſt Sinners could lay upon him by means of his Body, or what might come by the fear and apprehenſion thereof; what he might ſuffer, in his great Compaſſion to Sinners and Love to God, on the Conſideration of Man's Sin and Miſery, and God's leaving him for a time, who loved him ſo greatly, without more than common Aſſiſtance under theſe Sorrows, or what he might poſſibly bear from attempts of Satan; but they make God the Active Inflicter of more than all this, of the greateſt Torment, even that of the Damned, on that dear Soul, who was the greateſt Saint; making God like a Tyrant, like themſelves or worſe: They tell ſtrange Stories of Chriſt's bearing the weight of his Father's Wrath, Burning Wrath: Yea, I have heard an ignorant, but confident Preacher, tell his inconſiderate Hearers, that Chriſt was a Sacrifice, and roaſted in his Father's Wrath, and his Agony was *Certamen*, a Conteſt or Fight, and that Chriſt fought not with Devils, not with Men, but with his Father. But God himſelf teſtified the contrary to theſe bold Fancies, by a Voice from Heaven, that he was *his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed*; and we can't ſuppoſe that God changed his Mind, and became diſpleas'd with him who never ſinn'd, nor can he be ſuppos'd to contend, fight, or be diſpleas'd with his Father's Will, while we grant him without Sin; which is another Argument that God's Will was not the cauſe of his Sufferings; for there is no Suffering but from ſome ſort of Diſpleaſure with the caſe we are in; and if Chriſt were diſpleas'd with what God did, he ſinned. But we believe God

could not be displeas'd with Christ, being without any fault at all, so neither could Christ be displeas'd with God; but he might be displeas'd and uneasie, by means of Sinners. It must be a hard Heart, and impudent Tongue that can believe, or affirm that God was wrath with the most Innocent Creature, and tormented him, when God calls him his Beloved Son. God left him indeed to that Cup of the Sorrows of Death, occasion'd by the Body, inflicted by wicked hands: he left him deeply to be sorry for, and sympathize with miserable Sinners, and to grieve for the breach of his Father's Laws; but he never left him without the Knowledge of God's being his God and Father; he never had the Misery of Despair, Envy, Malice, Wrath, Strong desire of Impossibilities, Hate of God, &c. the chiefest Ingredients of the Damned's Misery. Whatever was his fear of that Cup, the painful, and lingering Death of the Cross, which was likely to be so tedious to one who in all probability had not been accustom'd to Sickness, or Bodily Pains; yet he was not left without the Heavenly Assistance of an Angel to strengthening him. Whatever was God's forsaking him, he was sure God was his loving Father, and that that day he should be in Paradise. If God left him to all the Pain and Anguish, the cruel Death of Crucifixion, or the Apprehension of it might produce in an Innocent Man (as he has left many of his Followers to cruel Torments) and did not interpose and prevent the Cup of Sufferings by some extraordinary means; God can be thought to be no more but the Permitter of the Wicked so far to afflict the Righteous, and to work no Miracle to separate Sorrows and Pains, from their common Conditions in Humane Nature. Christ's Patience under all, praying for his Enemies, submitting to Death, tho' he deserved it not, rather than omit his Duty, may be of great use to us to set

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before us the greateſt Pattern of Good-behaviour under Sufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake, and to forewarn us what we muſt expect if we will be his Followers. And whatever was the Cup Chriſt ſpake of in his Agony, the Author to the Hebrews, ch. 5. 7, 8, 9. tells us, that *when he had offered up Prayers and Supplications, with ſtrong Crying and Tears, unto him that was able to ſave him from Death, he was heard from his fear*, (which may encourage us;) and *tho' he were a Son he learned Obedience by the things that he ſuffered; and being made perfect, he became a cauſe of eternal Salvation:* To whom? *to all them that obey him.* So that, if we ſhould ſuppoſe Satisfaction poſſible to be made, how full ſoever, this Text tells us we could not be ſaved alone on the account of what Chriſt hath done or ſuffered, becauſe ſomething elſe is yet neceſſary, *viz.* our Obedience; ſo Chriſt's doing and ſuffering is not indeed enough for us, and ſo really no Satisfaction. But that God does truely forgive Sinners, that I think is ſo clearly, and often declar'd in Scripture, it needs not be farther demonſtrated; and Satisfaction cannot ſtand with Forgiveneſs, any more than the Word can be found in Scripture.

44. Having here diſcourſed ſomewhat concerning Sufferings, I think it moſt proper to ſubjoin my Thoughts about the Common Opinion relating to the Evil call'd Puniſhment, or the Miſeries of the Creature, conſequent on Sin: Wherein I think Men are generally miſtaken, while they look upon God as truely and properly the Inflicter; as the ſole Cauſe, and Efficient of this Miſery of the Sinner and obliged ſo to be. It is no wonder indeed that thoſe Men ſhould be of this opinion, who believe God was a Puniſher, and that a ſevere One, of the Innocent Jeſus; they forgetting even the Oath of God, *That the Soul that ſinneth ſhall die; the Righteouſneſs of*

the Righteous ſhall be upon him, and the Wickedneſs of the Wicked ſhall be upon him; one ſhall not bear anothers Wickedneſs, as we read at large *Ezek.* 18.

Nor is it ſtrange that any, who do not believe the Goodneſs of God greater than they can conceive, or deſire, ſhould eſteem God the Author of ſome ſort of Evil. But for my part, I muſt confeſs I do not ſee cauſe to believe that God is properly and poſitively a Puniſher, or the cauſe of Unhappineſs in any of his Creatures, much leſs bound to be ſo; or that any Evil can proceed from the Fountain of all Good, or any thing but what's good from Goodneſs it ſelf; but if God give any thing, it muſt needs be good. I would here be underſtood to ſpeak properly; for I know the Scripture, Tropically and Figuratively, after the manner of Men, ſpeaks often to the contrary. I do not deny, but affirm, that the wicked that die impenitent, ſhall be exceeding miſerable, and ſuffer Exquiſite Torments: But I do not believe that thoſe Torments, or Pains, and Diſeaſes in this life, are inflicted, or cauſed by God's Immediate Hand, but are the Work and Procurement of Sinners, according to that *Jer.*2.19. *Thine own Wickedneſs ſhall correct thee,* &c. God can I think be no more the Cauſe of the Creatures Miſery than of its Sin, otherwiſe than as he is the Cauſe of the Creatures being capable thereof; ſo that the Creature could neither ſin nor ſorrow, if God had not made it a Creature.

Let us endeavour to clear this matter if poſſible, that I may not be thought by all Men groſly miſtaken, to hold ſo great a Paradox as that God does not puniſh for Sin.

There are two ſorts of Evils the Creature is capable of, Sin and Miſery, or rather Sin and Diſpleaſure; which though we call two, are in many Reſpects the ſame.

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That God ſhould be the Cauſe of Sin, few will in words, tho' many do in conſequence, affirm; and I think I have ſaid enough before to convince them both. But Diſpleaſure or Miſery moſt Men I meet with, eſteem God the Cauſe of to the Creature. In the Conſideration of Miſery, we have,

Firſt, The Want of Good or Pleaſure.

Secondly, The Preſence of Evil or Diſpleaſure.

Firſt, As to the Want of Pleaſure: It is certain God made Intelligent Creatures capable of Intenſe, and perpetual Pleaſure and Satisfaction; but if the Creature has it not, it is not God's fault: It was impoſſible the Creature ſhould have continual Happineſs or Pleaſure, as God has it, *viz.* independently in it ſelf, or by its own Will as its own, oppos'd to the Will of God: God could make it no more than a Creature, and ſo the Creature muſt needs be ſatisfied by its Creator. But if the Creature turns from God, and ſets up a Will againſt him, he muſt needs want Satisfaction, when through Creature-Impotence he can't have his Will, God's Will not concurring with his; and when, through Creature-Folly, he has willed what was not beſt for him, and finds it ſo. So that if the Creature wants any Pleaſure or Good, it is becauſe he has turned from it, or left it, or at leaſt has ſome other Sinners hindering it, or taking it from him by their Sin; for even the Innocent (as Chriſt was) being Creatures, may ſuffer by the Sins of others. But the preſence of this Evil of Diſpleaſure, may farther be conſidered under two Heads. 1*ſt*. Diſpleaſure merely mental. 2*dly*. Diſpleaſure, or Pain by the occaſion of the Body; both of them in their center, are nothing but diſcontented or uneaſie Thoughts; a Conſideration or Apprehenſion of ſomething againſt ones Will. Now as to the firſt; If I deſire that which is contrary to the Order of the Creation, unfit to be, and cannot have it, and there-

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fore am fooliſhly diſcontent, angry, fret, rage, &c. It is not God that makes me do ſo: No, the diſorderly Deſire is a Sin, ſomething againſt God's Will, therefore God don't will it. To will ſomething againſt God's Will is a Sin; and to be angry, and fret and rage becauſe we can't have our diſorderly Will, is a farther Aggravation of the Sin, a ſtronger Will againſt God's Will, therefore God can't cauſe or will it; that were to cauſe Sin; ſo that God cannot be ſuppos'd the Cauſe of the Mental Unhappineſs, or Diſpleaſure. God has given Man a very large deſire, but for what; that it ſhould be croſſed becauſe he is but a Creature, and can't be God? No, but that it may be ſatisfied in the way it poſſibly can, *viz.* by its Maker, in the compliance with his Will, in the excellent Order of the Creation; that Man willing what God wills, *viz.* that which is good, and ſo to be done by God's Power, may be very happy.

But as to thoſe uneaſie Thoughts we have, or may have by occaſion of the Body, which go under the name of Pain and Diſeaſe, there ſeems more difficulty to excuſe God's hand from being the Giver. But I think, if we conſider, it may ſoon appear that God is no more the Cauſe of all the Conditions, or the Actual Exiſtence of this Miſery, than of that Diſcontent Sinners have when they have not their fooliſh Wills in other things. The Connection of the Body with the Mind, without which ſuch Senſations are not probably thought to be in the Mind, is to be aſcribed to God as the cauſe. The manner of this Union of Soul and Body, is Uſe; the Mind deſires to uſe the Body, acts upon it, by, and with it, and receives divers Ideas, or Thoughts of Body, by occaſion of it: God's Will is indeed the Bond of this Union; he wills that the Mind ſhould deſire to uſe its Body, gives the Mind power to move it, and to do divers things in Bodily Nature by it; and cauſes that

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when ſuch and ſuch Conditions are in the Body, the Mind ſhould have ſuch and ſuch Ideas or Thoughts, pleaſing or diſpleaſing: But, as I ſaid before of Sin, God made Man capable of Sin, not that he might ſin; ſo God made Man capable of diſpleaſing Thoughts by means of the Body, not that he might have them as the end of the Capacity, but that he might as much as poſſible avoid the leaſt thing that tends to the ſpoiling or diſordering of the Body, with which he is to act a Part for a time. When there are the Conditions of Pain or Diſeaſe, God in his general Law in Nature wills Pain, or diſcontented Thoughts, ſhould follow, and ſo this Diſcontent in it ſelf is not ſinful: but God is not the Cauſe of the Application of the Conditions, but the Sinner himſelf, or ſome other Sinner for him. When there is ſuch and ſuch a Body abus'd, and unduly apply'd to Man's Body, the Mind preſently is uneaſie, as at the approach of ſome Enemy; but this Uneaſineſs was not the end God cauſed in Man ſuch a Senſibility; but that Man might be the more affected with the pleaſing Senſations, he has made him capable of by avoiding at the firſt touch all things that tend to remove the Conditions of Pleaſure; that he might ſooner be warned ſo, than he could by Conſideration. God made Man exquiſitely ſenſible that he might be capable of Pleaſure even by having a Body, and not be as it were impriſon'd againſt his Will; and whenever the Conditions of Pleaſure are preſent, God fails not to cauſe that Senſation, tho' under Circumſtances where the Creature acts againſt his Will: So on the contrary. But Man has a power given him to uſe or abuſe things; and it is one part of his buſineſs in this World to do all thoſe things that tend to keep his Body moſt in health and eaſe, that he may be the more capable of the chief part of his Work, which does not relate only to this Life, but

that which is to come; *viz.* the rectifing his Thoughts in order to his greateſt, and laſting Happineſs. But to bring the matter near the eye if poſſible, take this inſtance. Fire tends to the Deſtruction of the Body if too nearly apply'd, but if keept at a due diſtance it occaſions a ſort of Pleaſure tending to the Conſervation of the Bodily frame: God is the Cauſe I am pleas'd or diſpleas'd, as it's due or undue application, but he does not unduely apply it; nor has he created it of ſuch a nature for my Hurt or Diſpleaſure; that would be a Diſorder in his Works, but for my Good, the Conſervation of my Body and Pleaſure. But when that, or any other Body is apply'd to my Hurt, it is I my ſelf, or ſome other Sinner, thar either ignorantly, careleſly, fooliſhly, or wickedly abuſes it. Now my bare being uneaſie, or diſpleas'd at the undue application of things, is not ſinful; my unduely applying them may be very culpable. Chriſt we believe was innocent, tho' he had an uneaſie Averſation at the application of things hurtful to his Body; but he did not apply them, nor did God apply them, or will them apply'd; for if he had ſo done, Chriſt's being uneaſie or diſplea'd, would not eaſily be excus'd from Sin. So if I drink, or eat to exceſs, and get a Feavor, Headach, or Vertigo, God is not properly ſaid to be the Cauſe of my being ſo diſordered; but my ſelf, in abuſing my Meat and Drink. It is certain that 'tis the abuſe of Bodily things, and extravagant Paſſions of the Mind, that procures Sickneſs and Pains, and Sinners are the Authors of theſe Abuſes: and yet alas, I hear them often the Authors of a greater, *viz.* to ſay that it is the Hand of God that does all the miſchief in the City. With the greateſt Confidence will ſome Men affirm the greateſt Contradictions and Abſurdities, if they can but bring ſome miſtaken place of Scripture ſeeming to countenance their opinion; ſo

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they will not fail to prove (as they think) whatſoever they fancy, or pleaſe. And there is no Fancy ſo extravagant but Men may find ſome pretence of Scripture for it, even to contradict Senſe and Reaſon, yea to prove that God is the Author of Sin, and all the Diſorders in the World, they think they have God's own Word for it. But Men would do well before they affirm God to ſay a thing, to conſider what the thing ſaid is, and on what occaſion, and whoſe immediate words, and how it can be underſtood. It is I think impoſſible to prove God ſaith a thing till we hear it, or that he ſaith that which appears to a conſiderate Man unreaſonable, or contradictory. God's Word cannot be double, for and againſt. I believe I cannot have a greater notion of Goodneſs, than there is really in God; the Scriptures abound with nothing more than Declarations of the Goodneſs of God: But I had rather acknowledge my ſelf a Fool, or miſtaken in Scripture, or be confuted in any thing, than have a leſs notion of the Divine Goodneſs. If I ſhould endeavour to prove a greater notion of the Goodneſs of God, than is commonly believed, from Texts of Scripture, I ſhould be pelted with others; which is the common way of diſpute, knock down Text with Text, knock down Reaſon with Scripture; but what I have now ſaid, may help any one to judge how far God may be ſaid to cauſe Evil. God is indeed ſaid in Scripture to ſend, yea to create Evil; but if the matter be nearly ſcand, it is no more but he permits it, leaving Men to themſelves, and other evil Agents; or he does Men a Spiritual Good, which indirectly is the occaſion of a Bodily Evil; as Repentance, and Righteouſneſs is the occaſion of Perſecution. But the Fountain of Good, Goodneſs it ſelf cannot properly give any thing but Good: Yet often have I been grieved to hear the Goodneſs of God blemiſh'd and wrong'd, as

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it is commonly even in Pulpits, when Bills are put up for Prayers for the Sick, and Troubled in Mind; how confidently will the Preacher hold up his bold Face to God, and tell him he hath afflicted this Man, hid his Face from that Woman; his Hand is heavy on One, and he is withdrawn from Another? Nay to say God hath visited a Person in the usual cant, is as much as to say some Mischief or other hath been with them. Then the Preacher, as a great Man with God, is to perswade him to change his Mind, and forbear such his troublesom Visits. And as he is in their opinion the Immediate Cause of such Evils, they would sometimes have him without any condition, that is miraculously remove them, or if the Parson, being a Friend to the Doctor or Apothecary, advises them to use means, then God is to be intreated to bless whatever is used, (I might say abus'd) as an Antidote to frustrate, or take away the Effects of his Will, tho' it be that which was never created to be a Medicine for the Disease they give it for. And this is also to desire a Miracle, to work an Effect by that God never made for a means; as to cause Fire to cool one, and Snow to warm one. But what is the matter good People with the Man thus pray'd for? Why he hath got the Gout, or the Pox, or a Feaver, *&c.* Alas, I'll tell you whence he had it. He hath took too much of the harsh Liquor of a foreign Country, and been too idle, and so vitiated the Crasis of the Liquors of his Body. Or he has strayed, and been too busie within the Confines of a strange Woman, that proved too hot a Climate for him; he has been in some great Passion, or vigorous Persute of some Worldly thing, and inflamed his Blood; indulged his Appetite, and debauched his Stomach with more Victuals or Drink than it could digest, and so supply'd his Blood with a vitiated Juice, or he hath been guilty of some other Intemperance

perance. Poor Man, doſt thou think theſe are God's Viſits? No, they are rather the Devils, or yet rather thou haſt viſited the Devil. Is this the hand of God? No it is the hand of thy own Concupiſcence: *Thine own Wickedneſs hath corrected thee; God is good, and doth good; he is good to all, and his Tender Mercies are over all his Works, and no good thing will he ſo much as withhold from them that walk uprightly.* The Councel I will give thee is to repent, and do ſo no more; pray to God to forgive thee, and to direct thee to a Phyſician to whom he hath given the Knowledge of thoſe things that are as Natural Means to reduce the Effects of thy Diſorders, as the things thou abuſedſt were to procure them. But what's the matter with the poor Woman that complains ſo of God's leaving, or hiding his Face from her, whereby ſhe is ſo much grieved? Sure ſhe loves him mightily, and wants a Viſit. Shall I be as plain with her as the Parſon ought to be? Poor Soul, ſhe's a Sinner ſhe knows full well; and tho' God has promiſed to forgive her if ſhe will repent, yet ſhe can't believe he will be ſo good as his Word; ſhe's loath to repent and try him, except ſhe were ſure: She can't find in her heart to forgive her poor Debters; Some-body or other has wrong'd her, and ſhe's reſolved to have Satisfaction; it is but juſt: So ſhe thinks God muſt have Satisfaction for her Sins, or he can't be juſt; and tho' ſhe has heard a Sin-ſweetning-Story that Chriſt hath made Satisfaction for Sinners, ſhe can't believe ſhe is of that number, ſhe is not ſure ſhe's one of the ſmall number predeſtinated: Shall I tell her yet more plainly what's her Diſeaſe? She loves Sin too much, Duty too little; her Heart is not inflam'd with Love to God, ſo as to influence all her Actions: She has not had him repreſented to her ſo Good, Merciful, Loving, Ready to Forgive all freely, as indeed he is: Beſides that Witneſs for God the Conſcience,

ſcience, that teſtifies when Man hath done well or ill, is not clear perhaps, and according to the meaſure of Obedience or Diſobedience, in known Duty, will the Comfort or Diſcomfort generally be to a convicted Soul; and faith that there is Forgiveneſs with God is one Duty, without which Comfort is ſeldom ſecurely enjoy'd.

Now let us conſider, has God left, or afflicted ſuch Perſons? No, they have left God, and hid themſelves from him; let them but be perſwaded to turn to God, and believe his Infinite Love and Goodneſs, and love him with all their Hearts, and they will quickly find that Perfect Love caſts out Fear; their Troubles will ceaſe with the reſtifying their Judgments, and changing their Wills. Now of all the Miſeries ſinful Creatures are lyable to, the Eternal Torments (as they are call'd) of the Damned in Hell can, I think, with leaſt reaſon be thought to come from the hand of the Beſt Being, as the Inflicter or Executioner; when theſe Miſeries may well be thought chiefly to conſiſt in the Exaſperation, and height of thoſe uneaſie Thoughts which are the very Acts of Sin; as Wrath, Envy, Hate, Deſpair, Deſire impoſſible to be ſatisfied, *&c.* Add unto theſe their Effects, with whatſoever Devils, and Immortal wicked Men may be able to inflict upon one another, and the moſt uncharitable Soul can hardly deſire a greater Hell for his greateſt Enemy. But what I have ſaid already of Diſpleaſure, merely Mental, and that which comes by the means of the Body, may be eaſily applied here, if well conſidered. But yet farther, methinks it is a very hard Thought to think that God who (as the beloved Diſciple tells us) is Love, ſhould hate, and take Pleaſure or Delight in tormenting his poor, fooliſh, frail Creatures; or that he ſhould *afflict willingly*, (or from his Heart;) or affect with Grief *the Children of Men*, and that for ever. But he muſt be ſuppoſed either

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to do it willingly, and take pleaſure in ſo doing, or he cannot properly be ſaid to do it; for God cannot with any reaſon be ſaid to do any thing againſt his own Will, or in which he has not pleaſure; that cannot be ſuppos'd of a Perfect, or Self ſufficient Being; nor can any action of the Creature be thought to bring God under a neceſſity of doing any thing he delights not in; and he ſwears *he hath no pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked*, Ezek. 33. 11. chap. 18. 32. It is the Sinner that will die, or chooſeth Death; he ſeeks pleaſure indeed; but he hath it not, becauſe he ſeeks it where it is not to be had, *viz.* in his own fooliſh diſorderly Will, diſtinct from God's Will, when God cannot give it him that way, it being impoſſible. The Damned doubtleſs are exceeding uneaſie; why? they have turned from God the Fountain of Pleaſure: They have lived and died in a courſe contrary to God's Will, contrary to the only poſſible way of Happineſs; and God is juſt in ſuffering them to have their own choiſe, in leaving them after innumerable Arguments to perſwade them to real good, to make the Experiment how happy they can be without being beholden to him; and it is enough to ſhew that God approves not of their Sin, if he continue their Being, his Work, under the greateſt Miſery they can bring themſelves into; and as they are no more ſinful than they themſelves, and their fellow Sinners can make them; ſo if they have no more Miſery than what they can work in themſelves, and one another, it will be proportionable to their Sins, and both may be exceeding great. God can't be thought to work or cauſe Deſpair, Wrath, Malice, Hate, and Envy, at the greateſt Good, Extream Diſcontent at his Will, and the Happineſs of others, fierce, furious, unſatisfied Deſire, *&c.* in his Creatures, he muſt not be thought to be the Cauſe or Agent of thoſe ſinful Paſſions; they are all againſt his Will, as he hath

clearly manifeſted. And we cannot ſuppoſe, that God's Juſtice requires, that Sinners for a ſhort life of Rebellion againſt their Maker in this World, ſhould be bound to rebel againſt him for ever; or believe that they can ſatisfie for ſome Sins here, with a Continuance of all Sins they are capable of in a State of Immortality hereafter. No, there is no neceſſity of Unhappineſs but what the Sinners own perverſe Will brings upon him; his diſorderly Paſſions are let looſe, and to what extremity Paſſions may be carried out, who knows? Theſe will be Tormenters if there were no Devils able to vex. And where theſe evil Paſſions are in their extream, how can it be thought that the Bodies ſuch Anxious Souls would delight in, can be other than the Occaſions of far greater Miſery than they were capable of being in this Life, [wherein ſome of the Paſſions diſorder'd have brought the Bodies to be very uneaſie Concomitants] with this Aggravation, that they have then no more Death to expect to rid them of that uncomfortable Companion, unleſs we could ſuppoſe that Hell it ſelf hath at leaſt this Happineſs to be a Remedy for the Diſeaſes of the Body, and a Safeguard from all thoſe Evils Sinners could lay upon one another in this life; or that their Folly could bring God under a neceſſity to diſown his well-wrought Work, their Being, and to let them fall into nothing. As for the Examples of external Judgments (as they are call'd) which we have eſpecially in Scripture, wherein ſome may think the immediate Act of God, as inflicting, is always required; when they were more than Preventions of greater Evils the Perſons would have run into, they may eaſily be accounted for, by ſuppoſing Men ſometimes left to the power of the Devil, the Prince of the power of the Air; who ſeems eagerly covetous to enlarge the Dominion of Hell, or to do any kind of Miſchief. Of this

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we have an Example in *Job:* Or that God ſometimes withdraws his Providential hand from protecting a People, or a Perſon that leaves him, and ſuffers them to fall into the hands of others that are wicked, their Enemies: As were the Judgments on *Iſrael,* or others by Inimical Nations; in which Inſtances we can't ſuppoſe God does inſpire the evil Agents with malicious Deſires of Murders, Robberies, Rapes, *&c.* God may indeed be thought to permit, yea commiſſionate a People to ſtand up againſt another in juſt defence, and to cut off the declared, and dangerous Enemies of Mankind; but ſuch wicked Perſons have brought others under a neceſſity of preſerving themſelves, and them that are better than theſe wicked ones, or of delivering the Unhappy that are in their hands. God may likewiſe leave Perſons obnoxious to be ſurprized by the Elements; as by Thunder and Lightning, Earthquakes, Inundations, (things not evil in themſelves) Falls of Houſes, Infectious Diſeaſes, Caſual Fires, by which wicked Men may ſuffer, yea the Good be tranſlated from this wretched life without any ſpecial Act of God. But all theſe things, or I think whatever you can name of Evils, would be abſent were Men but as wiſe and good as they ought: Wiſdom would foreſee and prevent, and Goodneſs do no ill; the Wiſe and Good would not expoſe themſelves or others to the too ſtrong Motions of Bodily Nature, nor want God's ſpecial Preſervation, which the Rebellious have forfeited. Were but the Evil of Sin abſent from the World, I do not ſee that there would be any other Evil for which Mankind could be thought unhappy, or could be unthankful for their Being, tho' all things elſe were juſt as they are, yea were Man to lead his Life on this Earth for ever. Had I but this one Point to handle, I think I could eaſily ſhew how, were there not Sin, all the Defects in Nature

would be remedied. To conclude, God hath made all things in an excellent Order, ſuch as is moſt conducive to Man's Happineſs; but if Man fooliſhly affect to be his own Ruſe, and ſtrive to croſs the moſt wiſe Order of his Maker, it is no wonder that thoſe things God made for his Good and Service, are often the Occaſions of his Hurt, and too hard for him: God continues the Natures and Qualities of things; and it is not fit he ſhould alter the Creation, at the fooliſh Caprice of every ſilly Man, that Fire may not burn, and Water not drown, when Sinners pleaſe to have them changed; but tho' Fire burn, and Water drown him that fooliſhly abuſes them, yet thoſe noxious Effects cannot properly be looked on as Puniſhments inflicted by God, any more than he that hangs himſelf can be ſaid to die by the hands of the Executioner. And if God cannot be ſaid to give Good to his Creatures as obliged ſo to do, but ſtill gives of Grace; how can he be thought to be ſo bound to give Evil, as that he cannot be ſaid merely to permit the Creature to make it ſelf miſerable.

45. Another Opinion that hath paſſed long with Credit in the World, without any good ground, is the Doctrine of Imputation of Sin and Righteouſneſs. *Adam*'s Sin, ſay ſome, is imputed to his Offſpring, and ſo they become guilty in the ſight of God, and are deprived of original Righteouſneſs. Let us conſider the Plain Engliſh of it, and it is this; God reckons *Adam*'s Children guilty of *Adam*'s Sin: They don't mean the ſame Sin in kind, but that God charges them as guilty of their Fathers very Acts of Tranſgreſſion; which is all one as to ſay that *Adam*'s Act of Sin, is his Childrens Act. But this cannot be true; for as my Father's Action is not my Action, nor my Action my Father's, God cannot be deceived, and ſuppoſe the doing of one

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Man is the doing of another. Men commonly ſay we ſinn'd in *Adam*; but it is abſurd to ſay a Man ſinn'd before he had a Being; that which is not can have nothing ſaid of it; nor can it do, till it is. We were indeed potentially in *Adam*, but not actually; and where there is no actual Being, there can be no Action to be guilty of. God himſelf tells us by a Prophet, *The Father ſhall not bear the Iniquity of the Son, nor the Son the Iniquity of the Father; but the Wickedneſs of the Wicked ſhall be upon him, and the Righteouſneſs of the Righteous ſhall be upon him*; and the contrary would be unjuſt. One Man may commit the ſame Sin another did commit, and in that ſenſe be guilty of the other Man's Sin, or rather of the ſame kind of Sin the other did commit: Or one Man may tempt another to ſin, and ſo be guilty of the others Sin; but ſtill a Man's Guilt is his own, and not anothers. It may with more reaſon be ſaid that *Adam* is guilty of our Sins, and we of the Sins of our Off-ſpring, than that we are guilty of his, or they of ours, becauſe ſinful Parents are the cauſe of bringing a ſinful Off ſpring into the World, and often their Inſtructers in Wickedneſs. It is certain that one Man may ſuffer by the Sins of another; but not for the Sins of another, juſtly. The Father may waſte his Eſtate, and ſo the Children may be brought to Poverty; the Father may teach his Child to do Evil either by Precept or Example, and ſo bring him to Miſery. As for the Propagation or Original of Sin, in *Adam*'s Poſterity, there are Two Opinions, either of them much more likely to be true than the Fancy of Imputation of Sin, or God's taking away original Righteouſneſs; which is no better than to ſay my Firſt Father ſinn'd, and God charges me with it, tho' not guilty of it, and cauſes me therefore to want Righteouſneſs, or to become a Sinner. Taking away ones Righteouſneſs is tempting one to ſin. The

one of the two more probable Opinions, is that the Soul, as well as the Body, is propagated; and a ſinful Soul is uncapable of begetting a Soul, without ſinful Inclinations; a pure thing being unlikely to come out of an impure. Now leaſt it ſhould ſeem that the Soul is ſuppos'd propagated without any ground for ſuch an Opinion, I ſay both Scripture and Reaſon do at leaſt favour it: Adam *begat a Son in his own likeneſs*; *and* Abraham *begat* Iſaac, *and* Iſaac *begat* Jacob. 'Tis not ſaid *Adam* begat a Body, but a Son in his own Likeneſs; if he had begat only a Body, he had not begat a Son in his own Likeneſs. *Adam* was the Image of God as he was an Intelligent Being, and a Lord over the inferiour Creatures; and if *Adam* had not begat an Intelligent, or Thinking Son, he had not indeed begat a Son in his own Likeneſs. It is ſaid of the Regenerate they were not begotten of Bloods, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, which implys that a Natural Man is ſo begotten; as to his Body of Bloods, that ſupplies Matter to the Seed; and of the Will of the Fleſh, that is Carnal Deſire, inſtigating its Projection; but as to his Soul of the Will of Man, deſiring to get his like. That the Body of a Man proceeds from the Bodies of his Parents, none doubts; why may not the Soul as well proceed from the Soul of the Father in the Act of Generation, or of the Mother in Conception? It is by Virtue of the Word of God, *Increaſe and Multiply*, that there is any Generation at all; and why may not the ſame Word give a power to the Soul to beget a Soul, as well as to the Body to beget a Body? The Word is ſpoken to Man as a Compound of Body and Soul, and neither part is excepted. *Iſaac* was a compleat Man, conſiſting of Body and Soul; if *Abraham* begat only *Iſaac's* Body, he did not truely beget *Iſaac*. But you will ſay perhaps, the Body is diviſible, and part of

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it may be ſeparated, and become another Body; but the Soul does not conſiſt of parts, and ſo cannot be thought capable of producing another Soul. I anſwer; This is no difficulty; for the Soul to be begotten does not conſiſt of Parts, has no Quantity or Bulk, and ſo needs not a Bulky thing to ſpare a part to make it of: Why may not the Soul, the Immaterial and more Noble Part of Man, by the Will of God, be as capable of begetting a Soul, as the Body, the Bulky and more ignoble, is for the Production of a Body? Why muſt the Soul be thought capable of leſs in its kind, than the Body in its kind? Why may not Cogitation break forth into new Heads of Cogitation, as well as Body ſprout out into new Organical Bodies, tho' we may be ignorant of the preciſe Manner of both? But there is a ſecond Opinion which poſſibly may be true whether the Soul be propagated or no; and that is, That every Son and Daughter of *Adam* is tempted, and falls as ſoon as they are capable of chooſing Good or Evil; tho' not as their firſt Father with a forbidden Apple, yet with many other forbidden things; tho' how ſoon or preciſely, when they thus fall, is uncertain. That Children are for ſome time Innocent, ſeems to ſome very probable, not only becauſe the Scripture in divers places ſpeaks of them, *as not having done Good or Evil, not knowing the right hand from the left, not knowing to chooſe the Good, and refuſe the Evil; not to have ſinn'd after the Similitude of* Adam's *Tranſgreſſion*, &c. but becauſe it is not reaſonable that Sin ſhould be reckon'd where there is no Law, and there can be no Law where there can be no Knowledge of a Law. Had God not told *Adam* himſelf he ſhould not eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he could not have tranſgreſs'd in ſo doing. And that all tranſgreſs, and become Sinners, is no wonder; if *Adam*, a Man in his perfect uſe of Reaſon, having

but one thing forbidden, and but one immediate Tempter, was ſo ſoon tempted and fell, much more liable are they to fall who have not ſuch a Capacity of diſcerning, have many things forbidden, many Tempters within and without, yea and many Examples of Tranſgreſſion the ſtrongeſt Temptation; and are thereby inured to thoſe Actions before they can judge of them, which when they are capable of knowing what they do, become Sins; and tho' they come to know ſuch Actions are ſinful, Cuſtom is as it were natural, and not preſently changed. Moreover, Children are not only tempted, and taught to ſin by Example, but even by Precept, from Parents, from Nurſes, from Servants, from Play-fellows, *&c.* to be Proud, to Revenge, to Lye, to Covet, to Steal, *&c.* ſo wretched a World is every Mother's Child brought forth into, that there are none but the Son of the Bleſſed Virgin, (who was not only begotten by the ſpecial Operation of the Moſt High, but was ſtrong in Spirit, and filled with Wiſdom by the ſpecial Grace of God from his very Infancy ;) I ſay there are none but he who have not fallen by divers Temptations: Yea we are often falling even after Repentance, and have every day need to renew our Repentance, and come to the Throne of Grace for the Pardon of our Sins. Now if every Man's Sin is his own, and not anothers, and no Man can juſtly ſuffer for anothers Sin, much leſs can the Sins of Fallen Men be truely imputed or reckon'd to Jeſus Chriſt. As Chriſt is not really guilty of the Commiſſion of any Sin, or the Cauſe of any Man's Sins; ſo it is impoſſible God ſhould think he is, or reckon him guilty. Neither the Will of God, nor of Chriſt, can be in ſuch an Untruth and Injuſtice. Neither God, nor Chriſt, nor any but Sinners can charge Sin upon the Innocent, or puniſh him for it. Tho' Chriſt be ſaid to bear the Sins of the Sinful,

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it is not the Guilt of them; becauſe he is not guilty, and God can't reckon him ſo; nor the Puniſhment of them juſtly, or from God; but it is either meant he bears them away, that is ſaves them from them, by being an Effectual Means of bringing them to Obedience, or that he with Patience and Compaſſion ſuffer'd under their ſinful Actions and Miſeries, bore their Affronts, Injuries, Mockings, Scourgings, condemning, and crucifying of him, and was grieved at their Unhappineſs in ſo doing. Neither is Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, or any ones elſe, truely imputed or reckon'd to others. God cannot reckon, or think Chriſt's being obedient, is my obeying, becauſe it is not ſo; or reckon any Man obedient till he is ſo, becauſe Chriſt is obedient; If he could he would reckon amiſs. I cannot but admire at many (who reckon themſelves ſpecial Chriſtians) how they dare affirm that God reckons us guilty of *Adam's* Sin, or Chriſt guilty of ours, and puniſhes the one for the other, notwithſtanding God has declared the contrary, ſaying, *The Father ſhall not bear the Iniquity of the Children, nor the Children of the Father, and that he will not clear the Guilty, nor condemn the Innocent.* I believe the blind fancy of our Sins being imputed to, and puniſh'd in Chriſt, and Chriſt's Righteouſneſs being transferred on us, has been a means of transferring Righteouſneſs, and conſequently Salvation, from many a Soul.

46. Another Fancy common among us, and near of kin to this is, That we are to be ſaved by the Merits of Chriſt, and that he meriteth of God Life and Salvation for us, *&c.* The notion of Merit is this: The Perſon meriting does ſomething or other more than his Duty, whereby he obligeth the Perſon he merits of to ſomething or other as due; and the Meritor ſo deſerves, that he ceaſeth to be beholden for what is become by his Action due to him; but

but it is a Debt that cannot be withholden without Injuſtice in the Perſon he merits of. Now that it is a groundleſs Fancy that God ſhould become indebted to Chriſt or to us, for any thing Chriſt hath done or ſuffered, will appear if we conſider that it is impoſſible for any Creature to merit any thing of God for it ſelf; and if not for it ſelf, much leſs for another. It cannot merit for it ſelf becauſe all that the Creature has, or is, (except Sin) it has from God; and all the Acts of Obedience it can do, are naturally due to God. God can receive but his own; he can receive no advantage, or have any thing purchaſed of him from Beings that have nothing but what he lent them: Whatever God wills the Creature to do, becomes preſently its bounden Duty; what God does not will, it may not do. There can be no Works of Supererogation, as Men fooliſhly fancy, when none can do more than his Duty. *Adam* could not have merited tho' he had not ſinn'd, nor could have been properly ſaid to have been ſaved by Works; nor can any Man ſince be ſaid to be ſo ſaved; for to work Righteouſneſs is that unto which a Man ſaved from Sin, is brought; and Perfect Obedience to God is Salvation. So that to ſay a Perſon is ſaved by Works, is all one as to ſay he is ſaved by Salvation, or by being ſaved, or that Salvation is the Cauſe of Salvation. We read indeed of being juſtified by Works, which is no more than this; a Man that doth ſuch Works as God wills him to do, is juſt, or in ſo doing is become juſt, and ſo accounted; but ſuch a Man *hath not to glory before God*, nor can God be brought in debt to Man, or reckon the Reward he gives him that works a Debt, tho' Men may reckon it ſo. Man that owes all he hath, or can do of good, to his Maker, who cannot be profited, hath nothing to oblige God with, or whereby to merit of him. Chriſt himſelf could not in a proper

per ſenſe merit of God, for himſelf, much leſs for others; he was made under the Law, and whatever God will'd him to do was his Duty, and he did it, and no more; if he had done what God did not will, he had done more than was right; and if he did but juſt ſo much, he did but juſt what he ought. He was obliged to do the Will of God againſt all the oppoſition he met with from Men and Devils; he could not without Sin omit any part of his Embaſſy, tho' the People God firſt ſent him to were ſo rude as to evilly intreat him, perſecute him, and ſlay him. If Chriſt cannot offer, or bring any thing to God, that he had not from God, or do more than his Duty, and ſo merit for himſelf; much leſs can he merit for others: For were it poſſible he could love, or obey God more than he ought, yet his doing could never become anothers doing, or ſo be reckon'd by God. There can be no lending of Actions, or any thing that will paſs for a purchaſe in Heaven, tho' Men may ſpare, and lend things on Earth. It is God that moſt highly merits; he from whom the Creatures have all they have, and are, and can do of good, merits a return of all, in Love, Thankfulneſs, and Obedience; but he merits of the Creatures, not for them; he merits for himſelf only; for his doing is not the Creatures doing, and can never be truly ſo thought. God merits of Chriſt all he has or can do, in Obedience to him; conſequently Chriſt cannot merit *of* him, having nothing but what he hath received from his God and Father. Chriſt indeed merits *of us*, tho' not *for us*, Love, Faith, Obedience, *&c.* God hath ſet him over us, and made him our Lord and Maſter; and he hath freely done and ſuffer'd the greateſt things a Created Friend could for us, when he was no way obliged by us; and we are in debt to him, ſo much that we cannot eaſily be thought to merit of him. Men may merit

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of one another, when they may be profited by one another, and do ſome things they are not obliged to by one another. Now to conclude this point; I confeſs if the Conſideration of Chriſt's Merits, *viz.* what he merits of us, or what we are indebted to him, ſhall prevail with us to repent, and obey God as he hath taught us is our Duty, we may poſſibly be ſaid to be ſaved by Chriſt's Merits, as an inſtrumental Cauſe; but this is not the common notion of the Merits of Chriſt, or the bottom on which moſt Chriſtians embark, and the greateſt Villains ſail boldly out into the other World on, even from the Gallows, if Mr. Ordinary can but teach them to ſay, like Parrots, that they hope to be ſaved by the Merits of Chriſt: tho' they have ſpent all their time in Wickedneſs, and would return to the ſame courſe, could they ſcape the Halter, Chriſt hath been righteous enough for himſelf and them too, and they are thought ſafe if they can but believe; that is, have a ſtrong fancy that God accepts of Chriſt's Obedience and Sufferings, inſtead of theirs. The Papiſts are ſaid to believe a Man may Merit of God by his good Works; and we count them erronious for their Opinion, never conſidering that we Proteſtants believe as much; tho' not that you or I can merit of him for our ſelves; yet that another Man, which is more ſtrange, can merit for us, and ſo fall in with them, even in the fooliſh opinion of Works of Supererogation.

47. Another Opinion as groundleſly held among us, and near a kin to the former, is the common Fancy about Redemption, *viz.* That Chriſt laid down his Life as a Randſome or Price paid to God, to purchaſe Life and Salvation for us. Let us conſider the matter: Redemption is a buying a thing again that is loſt, ſold, and enſlaved. As for inſtance, a Captive: In which Action there are theſe things

things to be consider'd; The Redeemer; The Redeemed; The Price of Redemption; And the Person to whom the Price is paid. Now as to the Redemption of Sinners, the Redeemer in the first and highest Sense is God, to wit the Father, who has given us his Son Christ, the Ransom. Christ in a second Sense is call'd our Redeemer; because he freely gave himself to set us free from the Slavery of Sin. To whom did he give himself a Ransom? Not to the Father; because, First, He is the Father's own, and so cannot be given as a Price to him. Secondly, Because it is the Father that gives him. Thirdly, Because it is not God that holds us in Slavery, or he that is to be hired (by something he values as much as our Bondage) to let us go free from Sin, and become obedient to him: No, he commands all to obey him, and not to serve Sin, and does nothing less than hold us in captivity to Iniquity; he wills our liberty more than we can, yea more than Christ can; for as the Father is greater, so must his Love necessarily be greater. Christ is the Price or Instrumental Redeemer; Sinners are the Redeemed; but who is it holds us captive in Sin, to whom the Price is paid? Not God as I have said, that would be the greatest Contradiction; not Christ, he is the Price, and wills our Liberty; not the Devil, (as some have thought) he has not absolute Power over our Wills: Christ was not given to him, as a Ransom, or he ever on that account agreed to let us go free: It can be nothing therefore but our Selves, our own foolish Will, that captivates, binds, holds, and concludes us in Slavery to Sin. We are Slaves most properly to our own sinful Wills: The Ransom or Price, is therefore given to us. God has given or sent his Beloved Son into the World, and he hath done and suffered great things for us to purchase our Love. The Father

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ſent his Son to court our Good-will, and it coſt him his Life, with a great deal of Labour and Pains. We are God's own by Right, and Chriſt's by Gift in one ſenſe, as he is ours in another; but we have enſlaved our ſelves in Sin, and God does not only demand us again as his, but even hires us to be his again, that we may be willingly his, and ſerve him whoſe Service is Liberty. Chriſt hath given himſelf to redeem us *to* God, not *from* God, by his own Blood; that is, in perſwading us to ſerve our Natural Lord, our Maker, he hath loſt his Life; and we ſhall be very ungrateful to God and to Chriſt, if we don't ſurrender our ſelves, when God hath done ſo much to purchaſe our Good-will, that in loving him we may be happy. The ſerving our own fooliſh Wills is the greateſt Slavery; and we ſerve not the Devil, but in Subſerviency to our own erring Wills. The ſerving God is Liberty, the only and greateſt Liberty of a Creature. God hath given Chriſt to do, and left him to ſuffer whatever might tend to our Conviction, Repentance, and Happineſs in Obedience. God hath given him to teach and inſtruct us in his Mind and Will; and if this be not enough, alſo to give us an Exact Pattern and Example of ſo doing, and that againſt the greateſt Oppoſition and Suffering from Oppoſers; and if the Malice and Blindneſs of any were ſo great, as not to ſee a Conviction in ſo Clear Doctrine, Fair Example, and Great Love that was ſeen in his Life, and leſſer Sufferings, [Love of God in ſending him, and his Love in an entire Compliance with God's loving Purpoſe] his patient perſevering in Good-will to them, under his greateſt and laſt Sufferings he could ſuffer from them, may be made the higheſt and laſt Argument to make their hard Hearts relent, be convinced, and and change. Which Argument was farther confirmed by God's raiſing him from the dead, and receiving

ceiving him up to Heaven, thereby declaring that though they erringly put him to Death as an Evil Doer; yet he was not ſo in God's account, but Juſt and Good, in proſecuting God's Will for the Good of Men, againſt, and ſurmounting the higheſt Ingratitude. If my Friend, with admirable Wiſdom and Argument, councel and direct me how I ſhall get out of a ſad and deplorable Condition he finds me in, out of a way wherein I can never be happy, ſhall I not hear him? Shall I be ſo unreaſonable as to ſlight his Councel? If he give me a Pattern of himſelf in doing that wherein he is, and I may be happy; and farther, if he proſecute my Good, and ſeek to reclaim me to the denying of himſelf, ſlighting, and foregoing his own Happineſs, as much as he juſtly can, or as much as may be an Argument to me to hear him, if he undergo Reproach, Pains, and Sorrow for my Good: Farther, if he patiently ſuffer even my unkind and ungrateful Hands to be embrewed in his dear Blood, while I count him my Enemy, and an Evil Doer, and end all with the height of Expreſſions of Good-will, forgiving and deſiring God to forgive me; would not this be enough to ſoften, or break a Heart of Adamant, that ſhould once ſeriouſly reflect, and conſider Chriſt as ſuch a Friend that hath thus done and ſuffered, and given the moſt high and admirable Inſtance of a Creatures Love to Creatures, in Subſerviency to that greater Love he had to God, and ought to have, and to manifeſt in doing the Will of him whoſe Love muſt yet be thought to be greateſt, and to tranſcend all created Love, as much as an Infinite Being is above the Finite, as much as the Cauſe of Chriſt's Being and Love, is before the Effect.

48. Another Point, in which ſome Men perhaps as greatly err, is that of Chriſt's Interceſſion; the Manner of which as they ſuppoſe, is thus: Chriſt repreſents

preſents our Condition and Deſires to God, with what he hath done and ſuffered in our ſtead, and ſo procures of God thoſe good things we ſtand in need of. But that this may appear to be a Miſtake, let it be conſidered that it cannot properly be ſaid that Chriſt repreſents our Caſes to God, becauſe God can have nothing made known to him, being Omniſcient; nor has he any need to preſent his Obedience, or mind God of his Sufferings, who can never forget; nor can we think that Chriſt has any need to intreat, or any Capacity of procuring of God what he is not in himſelf as ready to give. But Chriſt's Interceſſion is rather a procuring, or perſwading us to be willing to receive thoſe good things God is ready, if we are but deſirous of them, freely to give us. And this Chriſt does in that Power and Authority God has given him, as the Head and Ruler of the Church, by all means ſuitable to perſwade and reduce the diſorderly Wills of Men; ſince his Aſcenſion by the Miniſtry of the Word and Spirit. That Chriſt pray'd to God when on Earth, was not to make known his Deſires to God, or to move him to fulfil them, who heard him always, even his moſt ſecret Deſires, and was as willing any good as he, yea will'd it firſt, which was the reaſon Chriſt will'd it; but he pray'd for our ſakes, to ſhew what God's Will was, and his compliance therewith; to profeſs his Conformity to the Will of his Father, and give us an Example of Worſhip in acknowledging God's Omniſcience. Nor do we pray when we pray aright, to perſwade God to our Wills; but to profeſs our Conformity to his, the Condition of our receiving; to ſtir up, and provoke one another thereto, and to profeſs our Deſires towards God, and our Dependency on him. And when we are ſaid to pray to God in the Name, or for the Sake of Chriſt, or to come to God by Chriſt; and when God is ſaid to

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hear us for Christ's sake, or do any thing for us for Christ's sake, we are not to think that the bare saying for Christ's sake is rightly meant, or that God will grant our Requests rather because of his respect to the Will and Pleasure of Christ, than from his own Readiness to do us good. We must not think it is with God as it is with Men, in this Matter, who do things for one to please another they more respect, which they were not in themselves inclinable to do; because God can have no greater Argument than from himself, nor can he be put in mind of any thing he forgets, or is not ready to give us. But we come to God in and by Christ, or in his Name on his account, or Sake, when we believe Christ's Message, obey his Precepts, and follow his Example as the Sent of God, or labour to be obedient to God's Will, the Condition of Happiness; and in so doing, desire and expect of God what by Christ he hath promised us. So the faithful *Israelites* of old were used rightly to pray to God for the sake of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; which was no more but this, that they came unto him as to such a one he had manifested himself to be in a special manner to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, expecting from him what he had eminently declar'd himself to them ready to give, those that are willing to depend upon him for good. So God's giving, or forgiving for Christ's Sake, is as much as to say performing his Promise made by Christ to those that by following him, answer the Conditions thereof. So by being in Christ; having an Interest in Christ; having the Spirit of Christ; is truely meant being stedfast in the Faith of Christ's Doctrine, constant in obeying his Precepts, exact in following his Example; or in other words, being like-minded with Christ; or being born again, or becoming a new Creature, leaving our wicked vain

Converſation, and living a righteous and holy Life as Chriſt did, and ſo coming within the Conditions of the Promiſes God hath made by him.

49. Now after all theſe Conſiderations, that I may come to a Concluſion, I ſhall lay down this Propoſition. That whatever Chriſt is, or hath done, doth or will do as God's Inſtrument in Man's Salvation, is effectual as it is an Argument to the Mind of Man, influencing and perſwading him to repent, and leave his Rebellion againſt God, and to become obedient and conformable to the Will of his Maker. And whatſoever Men may fancy to be done by Chriſt for them, without them, unleſs it conclude thus in an Effectual Argument to perſwade them to Repentance and Obedience, will be found indeed but Fancy, and vain Imagination. All the moſt fine-ſpun, and ſubtile Doctrines, all the Myſteries, and curious Opinions Men make ſo neceſſary, are of no moment unleſs they could have an evident Tendency to this end. Nor do the external, or ceremonial Parts of Religion, (which the world of Profeſſors makes ſo much ado about, and moſt urges) ſignifie any thing, but ſo far as they can be proper Motives to, or Signs of our Love to God, and our Neighbour. And the Lord's Chriſt came beſides other ends, alſo for this; To ſhew uſeleſs, and put away as unacceptible to God, the moſt refined, and ſplendid Farrago of External Worſhip, and Ceremonies of the Levitical Prieſthood; and to ſubſtitute as a more Spiritual, and acceptible, a more rational and profitable Way; Compleat Morality, or the ſimple Love of God and our Neighbour, with the Natural fruits thereof; leaving us in the room of that multitude of burthenſome Ceremonies (which yet were not ſufficient to ſatisfie the petulant Humours of Men) but Two (by him enjoyned)

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Externals, more than Reaſon it ſelf could dictate.

The one, That being convinced of the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine, and reſolved from the Reaſonableneſs of his Commands to obey them, we ſhould by ſome Diſciple of Chriſt be once Dipt in Water, thereby aptly to ſignifie that we are dead and buryed to our old Rebellious Life and Converſation, and riſen again to a new Life of Obedience; that we are waſhed from our Sins, that is truely perſwaded to leave them, and become clean or holy: Whereby alſo we take upon us the outward Mark or Badge of Chriſtianity, in a Publick Profeſſion of our Reception of the Doctrine and Commands of ſo excellent a Maſter as Jeſus, and own him as the Meſſias ſent by God to manifeſt his Will to Mankind. The Fitneſs of this Appointment in its whole Significancy, is evident, and the Obligation thereto lies entirely in the Inſtitution of Chriſt, he having ſufficient Authority to command it: And I ſubmit to it as a Duty I am bound in Conſcience to, believing that Chriſt could command nothing but what was according to the Will of God; and not that I ſuppoſe Baptiſm makes me or any one, a Real Chriſtian, or Member of Chriſt, or of his True Church, or a Child of God; or certainly brings into a Covenant of Grace, as ſome ſweetly perſwade themſelves: For the Unregenerate, yea Hypocrites, and Profane Perſons, as well as thoſe who knew nothing of the matter, may have been Baptized againſt their Wills, or willingly for ſome carnal Reaſon. This Ordinance is to be a Sign, and as it is a Duty, an Effect of Grace already wrought in the Soul, and is not that which can confer it; nor can it work any Spiritual Effects unleſs it be this: That having ſolemnly profeſs'd my Belief in Chriſt, the Meſſias, and

my Obedience to God's Will by him declar'd, I have a great Argument to perſwade me to continue ſtedfaſt in my Profeſſion, and ſhall very likely be influenced thereby. But I dare not affirm that the Ends for which Chriſt inſtituted this Ordinance, can never be attained without it, in ſome who are perſwaded that it is not an Ordinance; but thoſe who believe it a Duty, can never be excus'd in the neglect thereof. The other External Ordinance of Chriſt is, that we ſhould ſometimes keep a Holy Feaſt; wherein by the breaking of Bread, and pouring forth of Wine, we have repreſented and kept in remembrance our Lord's Death until he come again; and by Eating and Drinking together as Beleevers in him, is ſignified our Communion and Fellowſhip in the Benefits of Chriſt, and ſo Love to one another promoted. The Bread and the Wine uſed in this Feaſt, cannot be rationally thought to have any ſupernatural Vertue, or inherent Holineſs; to differ from other Bread and Wine, or upon any ſuch account to convey any Spiritual Grace, as many have inconſiderately fancied, or been eaſily perſwaded; and thence have even worſhip'd the Elements as a God, or at leaſt as an Idol. But whatever Spiritual Good may come to the Partakers of this Appointment, comes to the unfeigned Diſciples of Jeſus, as it is a Feaſt they keep at their Maſter's Command, in remembrance of his Death for their ſakes. Therefore this Ordinance was never inſtituted for thoſe that have not (as aboveſaid) profeſs'd their Chriſtian Faith, and do not live in the True Chriſtian Practice; it is a Profeſſion of Chriſt as our Maſter, and a Life contrary to his Doctrine, makes it but a Mocking of him: therefore it ought not to be communicated with the Wicked, or any but thoſe that at leaſt ſeem real Chriſtians: It ſhould be a Holy Feaſt,

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(tho' I confeſs few Chriſtians ſolemnize it like one) and ought not any way to be profaned, as God knows it has been too too much amongſt us, even as much as to be made a Teſt in State Policy; not only to diſtinguiſh Proteſtants from Papiſts, but, as one would think, to debar from, and render incapable of all Offices, thoſe others, who underſtanding the Nature and Ends of this Ordinance, cannot in Conſcience any way profane or abuſe it, as if they were Men unfit for buſineſs: when the greateſt Debauchees, having once ſignalized their Wickedneſs in profaning the holy Table of the Lord, are Men thought fit for Employments. But ſuch Communicants ſhew themſelves no more really to be of the Comprehenſive Church they partake with, or of any True One, (whatever the Parſon may fancy) than the Oaths ſo ſtrictly impoſed to oblige them to be faithful in all Offices, makes them ſo. For a Man that makes no Conſcience of profaning the Sacred Name of the Moſt High in his daily Converſation, or of any other Immorality, cannot be thought to come to the Table of the Holy Jeſus, but for Faſhion or for Intereſt; and he that calls God to witneſs a hundred times a day to the grandeſt Lies, and as often ſwears to the Promiſe he never ſo much as intends to perform, is a Man very unlikely to count himſelf bound by a ſolemn Oath. And I cannot but admire the profound Policy of thoſe (if there are any ſo cunning) who think to oblige Infidels to Fidelity, by ſwearing them; as I wonder at the Exceſs of their Religion, who will needs bind Men by Oaths in almoſt all Offices, to things never intended, or hardly poſſible to be done. I confeſs I had thought the Worldly Intereſt enough to oblige any Man in worldly things, and the moſt likely to bind thoſe who by their Immoralities ſhew themſelves Men of no Conſcience; and I acknowledge it

was my opinion, that the pinching of the Pocket by ſqueezing a Fine, or ſome Corporal Puniſhment for the Failure in Performance of an Office, was more likely to be ſenſibly felt in this Life by the drowſie Conſcienc'd Sinner, than the Guilt of faſhionable unpuniſh'd Perjury: But ſtill I think a good Man the moſt likely Perſon to do his reaſonable Duty, tho' not obliged by an Oath; and a conſcientious Man injur'd, when he cannot be truſted without invoking the Sacred Name of God in trivial matters.

50. I ſhould have thought of concluding here, but that a monſtrous Opinion at laſt ſtarts up, *viz.* the old Pagans Doctrine of Fate, ſprung up in Chriſtianity; which Hydra muſt be beheaded, or all is in vain. What ſignifies all I have ſaid? To what purpoſe ſhould we labour to be wiſe, good, or penitent? If God has not abſolutely decreed that we ſhall go to Heaven, all that we can do will be in vain. God hath abſolutely decreed, that a certain ſmall number ſhall be ſaved, and none elſe poſſibly can, whatever they do; the few thus elected, cannot periſh; but all the reſt God hath fore-ordained to Deſtruction, and they cannot poſſibly be ſaved, ſaith this Doctrine. But if we conſider a little, this Opinion will appear highly unreaſonable, even without examining thoſe Texts of Scripture that ſome fancy do favour it; or as the Cuſtom of Diſputers is, oppoſing others. It is certain that God can never be ſuppos'd to diſown himſelf, or contradict his own Will, and therefore we may not think that God does not will the Rational Creatures to behave themſelves as ſuch Creatures ought, or as it becomes them; that is freely to acknowledge, own, love, and obey their Maker: but to ſay God wills the Damnation of any of his Creatures, is the ſame thing as to ſay he wills they ſhould not behave themſelves as becomes their relation to God, but that they ſhould

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perſiſt in ſetting up their own Wills in oppoſition to their Creator's: For Damnation, and perſevering Diſobedience, is the ſame thing, or at leaſt inſeparable; ſo that Damnation cannot be will'd, or abſolutely decreed, unleſs Sin be alſo ſo decreed, which would be to make God the Author of Sin, yea to deſtroy the notion of Sin: for God's Will is the Rule of Duty; and if it be God's Will I ſhould ſin, and be damn'd, it is beſt ſo to be, yea my Duty; and ſo there is neither Sin nor Damnation. But as God's Will can't be contradictory to his Will, ſo his Will and his Word cannot differ. If God has commanded me to love and obey him, (and none I think is excepted from that Duty) and I ſuppoſe he has determined I ſhall not love and obey him, or laid me under a neceſſity of doing otherwiſe, this is to affirm God the greateſt Deceiver, and Mocker of his Creatures; but this muſt not, nay cannot in reaſon be imagined of Goodneſs. Nor can it be thought that God ſhould be ſo indigent or cruel to the Works of his hands, poor frail Creatures, as to make or ſuffer them to be miſerable for any Satisfaction or Pleaſure he can have in their Miſery; or who can well imagine that if the Creature throw down its Weapons of Rebellion againſt its Maker, and ſubmit, yield under him, and acknowledge him, God will not be ready to forgive, and make him happy in Obedience? Since Man hath ſinn'd, nothing can be better than his Repentance, and future Obedience; his Rebellion can't poſſibly be as good as Obedience; certainly then God cannot will, or effectually cauſe that which is not ſo good. God has done very great things to perſwade all to obey, and be happy. If Obedience or Diſobedience were not free, but neceſſary, it would ceaſe to be Obedience or Diſobedience. Men have power to act, or ſuſpend their Action till they

are perſwaded by Argument to act. If they will not obey God, and be happy, 'tis their own fault, not God's; he has given them means of Information, as well as Arguments to perſwade them. God I think is but barely the Permitter of any ſort of Evil, the Creature is the Cauſe and Worker thereof; and tho' God fore-knows that his Creatures will do Evil, he does not by any Fore-knowledge determine that they ſhall do it, or neceſſitate them, or perſwade them thereto. God does perſwade, and that ſtrongly, to Good no doubt, but never to the contrary; nor can he be well ſaid to neceſſitate us to do Good: for what a Man cannot but do, is no Obedience, nor properly his Action. God's Decree, and his Fore-knowledge, I think, ought to be diſtinguiſh'd; and his Decree it ſelf alſo, is to be conſidered two ways, *viz.* either as abſolute, or as conditional. That which he hath abſolutely decreed, is that which he will certainly effect, and can be nothing but Good. What he hath conditionally decreed, comes to paſs but on Suppoſition of the Conditions, and it is left in the Creatures liberty to perform, or not perform the Conditions; and even the things thus decreed muſt be ſuppos'd to be good, things that God will do if the Creature will perform the Conditions, otherwiſe not; ſo that God is properly ſaid to decree his own Actions thus or thus. The Fore-knowledge of God, or what he is ſaid to foreſee, is no more but what the Creature (who always chooſeth an appearing Good) will think well or ill, and ſo do or not do; ſo that God decrees his own Actions, but fore-knows the Creatures Actions: And what the Creature at any time thinks well or ill, depends on its Capacity of Knowledge, and Circumſtances it is then naturally in, or how far it is liable to be miſtaken in it ſelf, or impos'd upon by ſuch Agents as will certainly as much

much as they can deceive it; and when, and where and how far God will permit, or interpoſe by his ſpecial Acts of Information, and Perſwaſion. But that God ſhould decree abſolutely, or will any Evil, is an Opinion ſo full of Abſurdities, yea and in its tendency ſo apt to over-throw all Religion, that no ſingle probability, or other difficulty, can perſwade a conſiderate Man to believe it; therefore I think I need ſay no more in this matter.

51. And now after all theſe Conſiderations, I cannot but reflect, and conſider with Grief the miſerable State of Chriſtianity, and the Profeſſors thereof, (as well as of the reſt of Mankind) of the generality of thoſe that call themſelves the Reformed, and Proteſtants, as well as of the Papiſts, between whom I can ſee but very little difference, they agree ſo much ſtill in many the ſame Unreaſonable Doctrines as the Fundamentals of Religion, as well as conſent in the like wicked Practices, as the Upholders and Effects of thoſe Doctrines. How much is the World, and many the higheſt Pretenders to Religion in it, alienated, and changed from True Religion, and the Scope and Deſign thereof, in its Primitive Purity and Plainneſs? How much more buſie and concern'd are Men in contriving and contending for idle and uncertain Speculations and Niceties, than in doing the plain, undoubted, and neceſſary Duties of the Goſpel, Natural Religion, or the Practice of Love, Goodneſs, Mercy, Brotherly Kindneſs, Patience, Meekneſs, Humility, Truth, &c? They ſeem much more intent, in conſidering (according as every ones Fancy and Education leads him) how Men are, or may be ſaved, or not ſaved, than in working out their own, or in furthering other Mens Salvation. Whilſt they place the main buſineſs in hitting the right notion, how Salvation is wrought, (and in this

this they are also commonly mistaken) they labour very little in conforming to the easily known Will of God, according to the Precepts and Pattern he hath given us in the Man Christ Jesus; whose pure, holy Life seems hard and uneasie to the Rebellious Will; but to be saved in the Theory, is look'd upon now as more pleasant and desireable. And how apt are Men now a-days to judge and condemn one another, and that merely on the account of their Differences, even in their idle Speculations, in which Censures some are so ridged, that they will hardly allow any but themselves, and a few whose Noses are just of the same length and fashion, to have smell'd out the way of Happiness, or to be fit for Christian Brotherly Communion with them. But we will not be afraid to affirm, That whosoever truely loves God, and his Neighbour, shall certainly be saved or happy; nay, is pass'd from Death to Life: Whosoever does not, cannot be happy till he does, tho' he may have the finest, yea the best System of Divinity in his Head: Tho' he have all Faith, even to remove a Mountain of Contradictions, to believe the greatest Mysteries, Absurdities, or Nonsense imaginable. That one pure, simple Act, and Habit of Child-like Love to God, is really more influencing to persevering Obedience, and pleasing to God, than the most Catholick Orthodoxy in the World. He more truely knows God, even by experience, that loves him, tho' but a Child, than the most eloquent and subtile Teacher in the World, that does not love. But I am afraid, nay I think I need not question it, that the life of Religion is very much eat out, and weakned by those many unreasonable Doctrines: Whilst we have it taught either implicitly or expressly, That God is the Author of Evil. One that made the greatest

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part of the Creation for that very end, to be inevitably miſerable for ever; and conſequently that they muſt needs be, and continue Sinners to make them ſo: That he is one that loves the Miſeries of his Creatures, and takes ſuch pleaſure in their Pains, that he will bear with their Rebellion for ever, rather than not have them unhappy: That he made the moſt of them on purpoſe to ſhew his Power and Sovereignty in their everlaſting Diſorders: Yea that that little number that he is ſaid to be dearly hired, and hardly perſwaded to ſpare, are continually afflicted with one Miſchief or other, from his hand; tho' they are ſeeking him, and crying after him continually, he is not ſo ready to hear, but often hides himſelf from them: And yet, that tho' this little number is ſo hardly ſaved, they are infallibly ſure of Salvation, do, or not do, what they will. Who would not rather be aſtoniſhed, and confounded, and render'd inactive, than influenced to love and obey God by theſe Doctrines? When farther I am told, that I cannot keep God's Commandments, but that Chriſt hath keept them for me, (conſequently my keeping them is not ſo neceſſary, if ſuppos'd poſſible) and God reckons Chriſt's Perfect Righteouſneſs to be mine, and I am perfect in him, tho' I am not like minded; all is done for me, without me, if I can but believe, that is fancy ſo. Ah, but my Heart miſgives me; may one that conſiders ſay, I fear that if Chriſt hath done all for me without me, he will be happy alſo for me without me, and I ſhall go to Heaven but by Proxy. Who will be humbled before God, and thankful for his free Beneficence and Forgiveneſs, when we are perſwaded that Chriſt hath purchaſed it at a full rate of him, by his Doings, yea and Sufferings for us, and we may demand Happineſs of God as our due? But I fear many ſuch Confidents

will

will be put off with, *I know you not.* Nay, how do we acknowledge God juſt and good, and ready to forgive, when we are perſwaded that tho' he does not ſatisfie himſelf in puniſhing us for our Sins, yet he will have them puniſhed ſomewhere or other? and rather than any where, in the moſt Innocent Man Jeſus; on whom, they ſay, he laid all the Puniſhment or Miſery, due for the Sins of all Men, (and yet nevertheleſs moſt of them are damn'd, and all of them die) and that he reckon'd him guilty of others Sins, tho' he were not ſo. O Juſtice! how unjuſtly hath the Malice of the Adverſary repreſented the Fountain of Goodneſs and Juſtice? But what ſhall the Generality of Mankind do? What Encouragement ſhall they have to their Duty? How ſhall they be ſtir'd up to ſeek Life, and Happy Immortality? eſpecially the poor Convinced Souls that cannot get up ſo high as to read their Names in the Eternal Decree of Life, or ſee yet much of the Effects thereof in themſelves? When they are told, unleſs they are of that little number Chriſt has made Satisfaction for, (and ten thouſand to one whether they be or no) all their Repentance is in vain, and their beſt Works are Sins in the ſight of God, tho' perhaps ſplendid Ones: When they are taught that greater Goodneſs, Juſtice, Mercy, Truth, *&c.* in one Man, is leſs acceptible to God than much leſs in another, and ſo God a Reſpecter of Perſons. Suppoſing I cannot perſwade my ſelf (as I think all Predeſtinarians do) that I am one of the Elect, or do not believe that God has abſolutely decreed either to ſave or damn any; I am nevertheleſs convinced of my Sin and Duty, as the way of Unhappineſs or Happineſs, and would fain be happy; Shall not I do my Duty on a Fancy that God has not decreed the Event? or muſt I deſpair in it? the former were but Madneſs,

Madneſs, the latter a miſerable Condition. But I muſt leave theſe things to the Thoughts of the Conſiderate; and to them I would propoſe this Queſtion; What has been the reaſon that no more of Mankind have embraced Chriſtianity, and where has the fault been? I think ſurely Original Goodneſs has not hinder'd, nor has the fault been in the Chriſtian Religion it ſelf, or in the want of the Love of Happineſs in Mankind: I believe you muſt confeſs, that the generality of its Profeſſors have diſcredited Chriſtianity, and given the World a falſe Draught, or Picture thereof: Till which is mended, what hopes can we have of the Converſion to Chriſtianity of thoſe who have not from their inconſiderate years its Deformed Doctrines, impos'd upon them, and the diſagreeing Lives of its Profeſſors recommended to them? What Expectations can we have of convincing Jews, Turks, and Pagans, when not only the above-named Doctrines, and an hundred more perhaps, have repreſented Chriſtianity as full of Contradictions, and Abſurdities, and unſuitable to the Condition and Nature of Man: But we even ſeem to differ in our Notions, whether there be One or More Objects of Divine Worſhip; inſomuch, that if thoſe that have not yet embraced Chriſtianity were to hear our Diſcourſes, and Forms of Worſhip, they could not, I believe, but think that a great part of Chriſtians believe, and worſhip more Gods than One, and even enjoin ſuch a Faith and Practice upon pain of Damnation; yea ſome of them, having no better Arguments, urge it by the Rack of Perſecution; while their Lives alſo are as different from Unity in pure Chriſtian Morality: Which now adays is diſtinguiſh'd from Religion, O Times! and a Moral Man is ſpoken of with Contempt, in compariſon with the Religious, as a different Perſon. But I muſt confeſs I look upon

upon nothing as a Doctrine of Christianity, or think can reasonably be represented as such, or proved so to be by Scripture, which does not naturally tend to promote Morality, or Influence to those Good Manners which become our relation to God, and which are convenient, and profitable towards the true Interest of Mankind. I would that Men would once come to try Doctrines by their natural Inferences and Tendencies; then I should hope Truth would more appear. But I must here conclude, tho' I have been very short on every Particular I have been discoursing, as unable now to write all I could wish to say of the Natural, of the True Christian, and of our Laodicean Religion, promising my Reader an Answer to what he shall rationally object against whatever has been said in this Discourse; and therewith a fuller Demonstration of things, if God give me Life and Opportunity, supposing that my whole Life must be spent in labouring against our common Errors, if the Appearance of Christ don't bring on their Period sooner.

FINIS.